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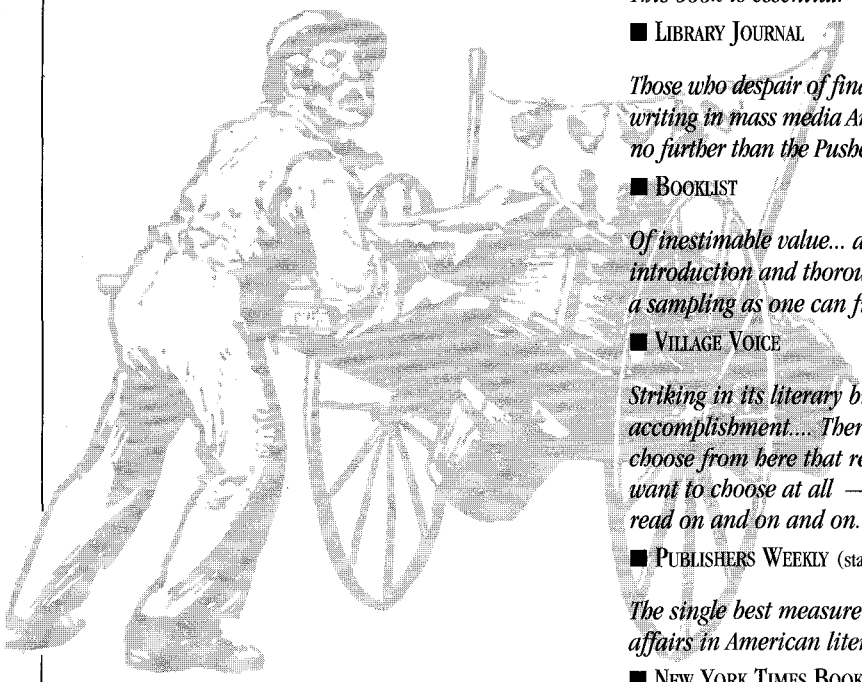

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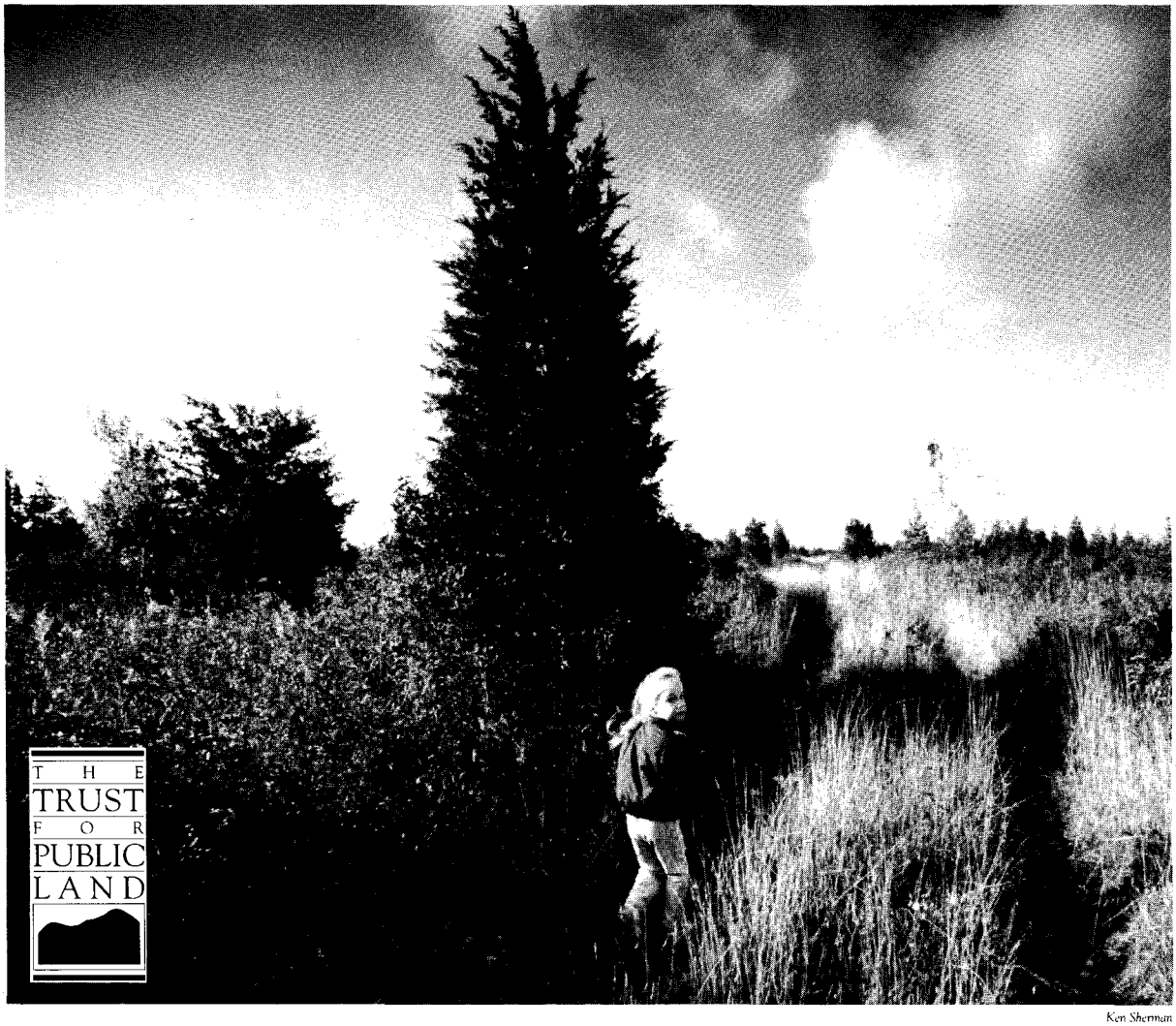

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Twenty-odd years ago it was our persistent fantasy that one day Harold Hughes would be the President of these United States. He'd gone from Governor of Iowa (an office he held as the NAR was settling in at our present address) to Senator, and thence, briefly, to presidential candidate. He had presence, credibility, a strong ethical center, and a superb speaking voice. Alas, he also had religion, a circumstance calculated to make any Ideal Candidate think twice about swimming in the cesspool of secular politics—and so he became the President who finally never aspired. His death, which occurred during the tedious bad vibrations of this year's race, reminded us of those precious few best and brightest who are never nominated. It is of course the primary system that guarantees us our secondary choices.

A few weeks back, we dispatched Our Man in the North Country to Saint Paul to mingle with the celebrants of F. Scott Fitzgerald's one-hundredth birthday; Leo Hertzel's report begins on page 38. And, on a different front, our resident philosopher, Robert Newton, visits (and reports back from) the original Underworld.

For the rest, here are stories, poems, and a couple of looks at Nature and Art as they are represented in America. The wars of politics have abated, but winter looms. Dance while you may.

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To the Underworld

ROBERT NEWTON

Watchman, what of the night?
Isaiah 21.11

AMANTHA SAMATIS

1. Two or Three Things about the Underworld

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I believed that the dead were punished in the ground by demons, and this tremendous idea was illustrated in my Sunday-school books. The demons were red, wrinkled, and had wings three sizes too small. They were the employees of Satan, who ruled the Underworld, and Satan had goat-horns, goat-hooves, hairy goat-legs, leathery wings three sizes too small, a red cape with an enormous collar, and a pitchfork with which to poke the raggedy dead. Everybody was knee-deep in flames.

Two or three questions about the Underworld occurred to me, even in my innocence. Why were everybody's wings too small? Why was Satan, once an angel, now a goat? Why did he punish the wicked? I mean, if Satan was the advocate-in-chief of evildoing, should he not greet evildoers with lemonade? If Jesus "harrowed Hell," as I was told, why was the place still open for business? And all of this, I was certain, was somehow connected to that Question of Questions, namely, Do we have to wait in the grave when we die, or are we carried straight to Heaven by the angels, or what?

Thirty years later my Religion Class sat before me, waiting to hear my mighty Lecture on the Underworld.

"If you are ready to descend," I said to them, "then. . . ."

"Just a moment," my students said. "A lecture on the Underworld? This is very quaint and colorful, no doubt, but surely there is no Underworld. Surely everyone is aware that this is a metaphor, a trope in a text. As modern theology informs us, Hell is of course the alienation of humanity from the Divine. It is the absence of God, the loss of transcendence, and the logical consequence of self-will."

God's teeth, I thought. How can one teach a Religion Class when no one has seen a god in two thousand years? And not only had the gods fled to the fastness of Heaven, but those wretched philosophers had announced, for some reason I can never remember, that all gods are now invisible, unknowable, and unthinkable.

"Tell me something," I said to my students. "Is there, or is there not, a pool of unclean water at the mall?"

"A what?"

"A wishing pool. A pool of foul water, full of pennies."

"There is a fountain with a pool at the mall," they admitted.

"In fact, I have seen two or three of you loitering about that pool."

They looked uncomfortable.

"Might I assume," I said then, giving them a penetrating look, "that some of you threw pennies into that wishing pool, and made wishes?"

They looked exceedingly uncomfortable.

"Then tell me this," I said to my Religion Class, mercilessly: "Who, exactly, in that undrinkable water, or beneath the green tile, or deep in the earth below the mall, grants wishes?"

"We do not know," they said.

I paused to let them reflect on their dissolute lives.

"Are we ready to begin?" I said then.

"Oh very well," they said. "Give us this Lecture on the Underworld."

So I spread out my yellowed notes and we descended. There was of course a digression or two on the way.

2. The Phoenix, or, We Look for an Entrance to the Underworld

THERE WAS ONLY ONE Phoenix in the world and she lived in Arabia. Since she had no mate she had to reproduce herself in a miraculous way, and it was for this purpose that she flew, once every five hundred years, to Syria and then to Egypt. The time had come and the Emperor Constantine, the first Christian emperor of Rome, was on his way to Egypt to adore her.

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Now Constantine had in his court as tutor to his son a Christian named Lactantius who was an authority on the Phoenix, having written a learned tribute to the bird. She lived, he wrote, in an earthly paradise to the east that had no clouds, no wind, "nor cruel death." When the time came for the Phoenix to renew herself, she first flew to Syria where she died and burst into flames. Her body, Lactantius explained, "conceives fire afar off from the light of heaven: it blazes, and is dissolved into burnt ashes." Then from the steaming pile of ashes "an animal is said to arise without limbs, a worm said to be of milky color." This worm "collects itself into the appearance of a well-rounded egg." Then from the egg at last comes forth the new Phoenix, who gathers the ashes of her mother, carries them to Egypt, to Heliopolis, and deposits them on the altar of the Temple of the Sun. It was there, in that temple, that a traveler might, if he arrived at the right moment, see and adore the new Phoenix.

For Christians the Phoenix was, understandably, a symbol of the resurrection to come. Clement wrote in his first Letter to the Corinthians that she was a sign from God:

> Now, when the Creator of all things has even made use of a bird to disclose the magnitude of His promises to us, need we find it such a great wonder that He has a resurrection in store for those who have served Him in holiness and in the confidence of a sound faith?

Or, as Tertullian put it, can "men die once for all, while birds in Arabia are sure of a resurrection?"

She was of course a splendid-looking bird, Lactantius wrote, like something in between a peacock and a pheasant. She had a gem-like, translucent beak. Her feathers were yellow, orange, red, green and purple. She made only a brief appearance, though. The "exulting crowd salutes the rare bird" in the Temple of the Sun, Lactantius said, but then she flies away, back to her weatherless Arabian home, "attended by a chorus of birds."

So in April of the year 325 CE the Emperor Constantine set out for Egypt.

IT ALSO HAPPENED that the bishops of Christendom had gathered that year in Antioch, which was on the way to Egypt, for an Easter Council. And the Emperor, who fancied himself to be something of a theologian, paused in Antioch to address the bishops and to illuminate one or two questions of theology.

Whatever the Emperor said was true. He made Rome Christian, after all. Heaven, Lactantius said, sent not only a messiah but an emperor as well. Constantine was the "friend of God," Eusebius declared, and God had made him Emperor, and meant for him to rule.

The Emperor stood before the bishops.

There had been, the Emperor said, a terrific Crucifixion Storm.

3. Two or Three Things about Supernatural Storms, or, An Entrance Discovered

LONG AGO THE EMPEROR Tiberius received one day a report that Pan, the son of Hermes and the grandson of Zeus, had died on some island to the west. It was no common thing to hear that a god or a demi-god was dead. So the Emperor sent a man named Demetrius to investigate and, according to Plutarch,

> Shortly after his arrival there occurred a great tumult in the air and many portents; violent winds suddenly swept down and lightning flashes darted to earth. When these abated, the people of the island said that the passing of someone of the mightier souls had befallen. "For," said they, "a lamp when it is being lighted has no terrors, but when it goes out is distressing to many, so the great souls have a kindling into life that is gentle and inoffensive, but their passing and dissolution often, as at the present moment, fosters tempests and storms, and often infects the air with pestilential properties."

The Romans knew about such storms. There was another, according to Ovid, at the apotheosis of Romulus: "The sun vanished and rising clouds obscured the heaven, and there fell a heavy shower of rain in torrents. Then it thundered, then the sky was riven by shooting flames." And when Caesar died, according to Suetonius, a comet shone for seven days. Afterwards, Plutarch wrote, for a year "the sun rose pale, and it had no radiance," and the whole world was cold.

That was nothing, the Christians said. There was a tremendous storm when Jesus was crucified. According to Luke, the sun grew dark. According to Matthew, the earth shook. Surely this storm was a supernatural storm like the others, the Christians said to the Pagans, and surely it proved that Jesus, though killed, was a god.

We are not sure, the Pagans said.

There was more, the Christians said. After being dead for three days and resurrected, He ascended to Heaven from a hilltop on a cloud.

But if all that was true, the Pagans said, then what exactly did Jesus do during the three days He was dead?

He went to the Underworld, the Christians said.

4. Jesus Descending a Staircase, or, What the Dead Were Doing in the Ground

IF JESUS WENT to the Underworld, the Christians believed, surely He found the raggedy dead. The dead were waiting in the Underworld for Judgment Day, for the Second Coming, and for the General Resurrection. On that day they would be raised from the dead, restored to their bodies, judged and, if need be, punished. So the whole population of the past, including the Old Testament Patriarchs and Prophets, was waiting in the dark.

But if Jesus went to the Underworld, the Christians reasoned, surely it was to continue His Mission. Surely He did for those in darkness what He had done for the living. He went below to preach, to work miracles, to save the righteous and to defeat the forces of Evil. Surely there had been a great victory in the ground.

About this subterranean drama, however, the Scriptures were almost

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without a clue. It was not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or Paul. Only the first Letter of Peter seemed to have a relevant passage. Jesus, this passage said, "went and preached to the spirits in prison," "even to the dead" of the days of Noah, because "The end of all things is at hand." So Judgment Day was close and at this late hour the ministry and mercy of Jesus had been offered to the dead.

All this was prophesied, Justin announced, but the Jews had stolen the prophecy. There had been a passage in the Book of Jeremiah and the Jews, those enemies of God, deleted it. Fortunately Justin found the passage again in an old papyrus and it read: "And the Lord God of Israel remembered his dead ones, who slept in the earth of dust, and He descended to preach to them His salvation."

So it was all true. But what was the result of the mission to the Underworld? It must have been a success, the Christians reasoned. Surely if Jesus preached to the Patriarchs and Prophets, to Adam and Moses and David and the rest, they were saved. "Indeed," Ignatius announced, "that was the reason why He, whom they were rightly awaiting, came to visit them, and raised them from the dead." They were no longer in the darkness.

Jesus broke the iron gates of Hell, levelled the walls, defeated Satan and released the prisoners. He harrowed the place, as the *Gospel of Nicodemus* described it, and then "the Lord, stretching forth his hand, made the sign of the cross on Adam and on all his saints, and holding the right hand of Adam ascended from the underworld, and all the saints followed him."

But if those below had been saved, the question arose—if the Patriarchs and Prophets had been brought up from the Underworld and stood once more, blinking and dusty, in the light—where were they?

SURELY THEY WENT to Jerusalem, Clement said, and there was proof of it in Matthew's description of the Crucifixion Storm. After the earth shook, according to Matthew,

> tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after this resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

But even if the Patriarchs and Prophets had been seen in Jerusalem during the Storm, they were no longer there. They must have left Jerusalem. Where were they?

The key to this mystery was hidden in the words of Jesus to the dying thief: "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." But Jesus did not leave for Heaven that day. Therefore, the Christians reasoned, the word "Paradise" did not refer to Heaven. Either the Messiah spoke gibberish or He meant another place, another Paradise.

There was another Paradise. Eden was still there, after all. Some said it was now walled and locked and guarded by the cherubim, but it was still there, and surely the Patriarchs and Prophets were safe inside.

That ragged company, saved from Hell, stepped once more into the light, trudged into Jerusalem during a terrific storm, then set out again, eastward, across the blistering desert, and at last they found Eden, and an angel let them in.

5. How Souls Are Dipped in the Unquenchable Fire, or, Nothingness Revealed

JUST A MOMENT, Tertullian said. This whole line of reasoning was some sort of ghastly theological mistake. After all, if the Underworld was empty, what was the point of a Second Coming? If Hell had been harrowed, what use was Judgment Day? Why have a big Apocalypse?

No, that was wrong. Hell was not empty. That was impossible and what was needed, Tertullian said, was for everyone to sit down and read the one irrefutable piece of evidence about the Underworld that Christendom possessed, namely, Jesus's own description of it. For it was He who told the story of the rich man and the poor man to the Disciples:

The poor man was carried by the

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angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame."

Anyone could see, Tertullian said, that Abraham was still in the Underworld. And if Abraham was there then clearly all the Patriarchs and Prophets were there, and not in Eden. The thing was, there were two regions in the Underworld—you could see across from one to the other. But while the Patriarchs and Prophets waited in one region for the Second Coming, in the other the unrighteous were already being punished.

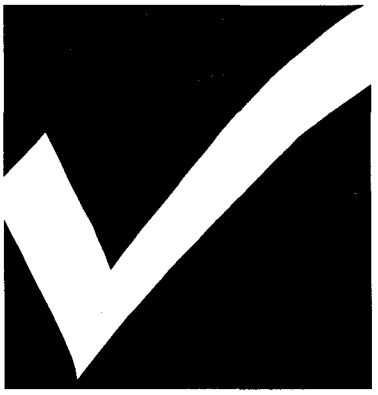
IMPOSSIBLE, OTHER Christians said. How could anyone be punished before being judged? No one was judged until Judgment Day, or what was it for? And, for that matter, how could anyone be punished before they were restored to the flesh? Those in the Underworld were only souls, and souls were invisible and unpunishable.

PIFFLE, Tertullian said. Had no one noticed that in His story Jesus said that the rich man wanted Lazarus to wet a *finger?* Souls had fingers. Souls were not ineffable, "For unless the soul possessed corporeality, the image of a soul could not possibly contain a finger." Souls must therefore be corporeal. Souls were something. If souls were *nothing*, why bother to keep them in the Underworld?

So the Underworld was full and the dead were being punished in the ground.

JUST A MOMENT, Origen said. Had Jesus saved the world, or not? Had He failed? Was the Crucifixion useless?

Origen had noticed that Jesus told the story of the rich man and the poor man before He died and went below. Of course the Patriarchs and Prophets were still there because, when Jesus told the



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story, He had not yet been down to save them.

What was more, if God were good then surely every lost sheep would be safe in the fold at last. Heaven could have no other Plan. After all, no sparrow fell unseen, no lamb strayed too far away. A merciful God sent Jesus to the Underworld to show that everyone would be saved.

Thus were the Christians divided. On one side stood those who, with Tertullian, believed a doctrine of Eternal Punishment, while on the other side stood those who, with Origen, believed in a Universal Salvation. One side said the Underworld was full, the other that Jesus harrowed Hell, so it was empty. One side said the Patriarchs and Prophets were below, the other that they were in Paradise. One side said that souls at death travel to the Underworld for reward or punishment, while the other side maintained that those who died had only to wait a little in the grave, sleeping, until Jesus came to wake them.

That was where matters stood when, miraculously, just as all the bishops of Christendom had gathered in Antioch to savage one another, the Emperor Constantine happened by, on his way to see the Phoenix.

6. Enemies

CONSTANTINE, on that April day in 325, stood before the quarreling bishops.

There had been, he told them, a terrific Crucifixion Storm. Surely Jesus was a god, since it was no ordinary storm. And were the Storm not proof enough that Jesus was a god, Cicero, Virgil and the Erthraean sibyl, the last in a "prophetic acrostic," had predicted His arrival and promised His divinity.

The bishops nodded. Heaven had sent them a glorious emperor and, being Heaven-sent, he was infallible.

The enemies of Rome and of Christendom, the Emperor went on, were defeated by him with the aid of God. But not only were they killed by him and God, they were also punished in the Underworld for their insolence.

The Emperor had casually revealed that the Underworld was full.

After his speech, the Emperor published this message in his Letters to the Heathen, for the rest of the Empire to read. Those who opposed the Christians, he announced, "have experienced a miserable end, and are consigned to unceasing punishment in the depths of the lower world."

IT WAS LEFT FOR Lactantius, the royal tutor, to fill in the fine points for the Emperor. How could souls be punished? Souls, Lactantius explained, are contained in blood, "as light is in the oil." At death the soul escaped the body, leaving an unconscious corpse behind, because the soul is consciousness. And because the soul is consciousness, it can suffer pain. Therefore souls may be burned in the Underworld.

How could anyone be punished before Judgment Day? Souls, Lactantius said, may be immediately punished because "they who have not known God, since sentence cannot be passed upon them for their acquittal, are already judged and condemned." Therefore the dead were being punished in the ground.

ORIGEN'S DOCTRINE of Universal Salvation was condemned at the Council of Alexandria in the year 400 and again by Justin at the Council of Constantinople in 543. In 745 the Synod at Rome condemned the idea that Jesus had released all the souls in the Underworld.

7. Lecture's End

I GATHERED UP my notes.

"Not that we believe a word of this lengthy lecture," my students said, "but why did Satan become a goat?"

"This was now the religion of Rome," I said. "He became a satyr."

"And why were everybody's wings three sizes too small?"

"When Satan and the demons, who were all creatures of the air, became instead the personnel of Hell, their wings began to wither, to atrophy. In imagination's logic, they were unneeded. The other angels, meanwhile, who were thought at first to administer all the punishments in Hell, slipped back to Heaven—Eternal Punishment being rather unangelic—and kept their wings."

"And did the Emperor," my students wondered, "ever see the Phoenix in the Temple of the Sun and adore her?"

"Unfortunately the Emperor did not. He had to break off his trip and rush to Nicaea to settle a grisly theological dispute involving the blasphemy of Arius, who denied the Trinity and said there was only one god. Constan-tine stamped this out by forcing all the bishops to sign under threat of exile the Nicene Creed, but that is another story."

"Will the gods," my students wanted to know, "ever return to Earth from Heaven?"

"We have Jesus, Mohammed and Siddhartha. We have messiahs to worship, once they die. Why should the gods come back?"

"We will wish for it," my students said.

Class was over. We went outside, stood upon the lawn, and looked up at the sky.

The whole world was cold. □

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PHILIP SCHULTZ

Mr. McGuire

No one thought of him as old,
but a bachelor gruff with climbing
five flights complaining Steinbrenner
should be horse whipped & sent back
to Cleveland, what the Yankees needed
was a real New Yorker. New York
in almost every sentence, the consonants
backflipping off his tongue like a boy
into the Hudson back when the century
was so new he carried it in his pocket
like a silver dollar. He didn't know how
it happened but one morning he woke up
older than his father, who didn't live to see
an American waltzing on the moon. We swapped
frustrations: the latest nose-dive of heroics,
how they didn't sweep the street like they used to,
the roof collapsing under the weight of his eighty-two winters.
His egg frying set off alarms throughout the building, but
there's no stink this morning. He lived here when the city
was a long hello & short good-bye & everyone spit-shined
their oxfords. Yes, we'll go on opening and closing doors
& watching new faces hit home runs in this howl of a city
where streets lead secret lives & pigeons gossip about the weather
—after eighteen years of his being lively in the halls, the stairs are silent.
Mr. McGuire was a real New Yorker.

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Mount Graham, Pinaleño Mountains

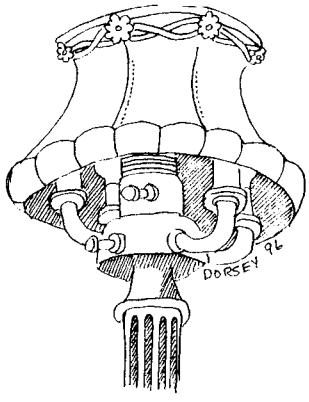
JANICE EMILY BOWERS

HIGH IN THE Pinaleño Mountains, the silence is as deep as the forest is tall. It fills space, like light; occupies time, like words. A jet passes high overhead, parting the stillness for a few moments, then silence rolls in like water. The trail underfoot is quiet, too, soft from accumulated fir needles and bark, all damp and rotting together. *Duff* is the forester's term for it, a soft word like the thing it connotes. Moss paints the duff with Kelly green stripes. Each stripe denotes a fallen log, now disintegrated. The forest floor must be thousands of trees deep by now, like Jerusalem, one ancient city built upon another, the modern town still thriving on the surface.

From the outside, the forest seems a wall. Inside, it is more like a loosely woven basket, dim but airy and remarkably spacious. Blue sky shows between the basketweave of spruce and fir and there is not a breath of wind. Only silence, and trees as dark as a green bottle filled with red wine.

When the trail spills us into a sunny clearing, we stop for the sheer pleasure of being there. Waist-high grasses and nodding blue harebells overhang the path. Thousands of mountain sunflowers as yellow as corn mingle with the grasses and with pink thistles as stiff as military hairbrushes. It is Hospital Flat crowded into a teacup.

Atlantis fritillaries, orange butterflies inscribed with runic black markings, revel among the thistles. They reach their southern limit here in the Pinaleño Mountains, even though the Chiricahua Mountains some sixty miles to the south are nearly as high and just as wet. Engelmann spruce and long-tailed voles also go no farther south. It works the other way, too: the Apache fox squirrel, the Mexican long-tongued bat, the Mexican chickadee and many other birds and animals are found no farther north than the Chiricahua Mountains. The Pinaleño Mountains are unique in southeastern Arizona: not only the highest range, but also the only one where winters mimic in severity and length the winters of the Rocky Mountains to the north. For plants and animals, the Pinaleños represent a kind of biological escarpment between the Rocky Mountains and the Mexican highlands, a Maginot Line between northern and southern forms.



As we step back into the forest, Steve points at a small, delicate squirrel running along the top of a log. When it runs through a bar of sunlight, we see the ruff of silver around its fluffy tail. The squirrel carries a big purple mushroom in its mouth like a dog with a frisbee. It hops from the log to the trunk of a corkbark fir, then with perfect grace shins up the tree, still clenching the mushroom. It runs out on a limb and wedges the fungus into a forked branch, tucking it well down among the lichens. Then the squirrel runs down the far side of the tree and disappears. I wait a long time but do not see it again.

Squirrel sign is more plentiful than squirrels: protracted trills from high overhead, freshly cut spruce cones scattered across the ground, and middens under certain trees. These are Mount Graham red squirrels, an endangered subspecies of *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*, variously known as the red squirrel, the spruce squirrel, the pine squirrel and the chickaree. In parts of their range, red squirrels are so numerous they are considered a nuisance. On Mount Graham, they hardly constitute a presence, much less a nuisance. As a result of logging and competition from the introduced Abert's squirrel, the population has dwindled to about one hundred fifty animals. Like the Atlantis fritillary and the Engelmann spruce, this is as far south as red squirrels go in Arizona. The nearest populations are in the White Mountains nearly one hundred miles north. All the area above ten thousand feet—roughly eighteen hundred acres—has been set aside as a squirrel refugium, and a team of biologists is on hand from May to November to monitor the squirrels.

Their sign is plentiful, too. Lengths of bright pink flagging tape trail off into the forest at intervals, always leading to a midden tree. More flagging and numbered stakes mark each midden site. Other biologists, not connected with the squirrel survey, have set up small wire cages just off the main path. "Seed traps," Steve explains. Before the first winter snowfall, the traps will be emptied. Their contents will give an idea of how many seeds of what kind reach the forest floor, and how this varies from year to year.

Continuing up the trail, we enter another meadow where everything is either huge or tiny. Cow parsnip, with leaves the size of umbrellas and flower heads as big as dinner

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plates, makes me feel as graceful as a ballerina, yet the delicate flowers of spur gentian, like miniature yellow pagodas, remind me that I am not. Alternately diminutive and gigantic, I am Alice in Wonderland, entirely the wrong size for the landscape I inhabit.

And so the trail goes, in and out of meadow and forest, a line like a story, a rhythm, a tune. John Gardner said that a novelist's primary duty is to maintain the illusion that the fiction he or she tells is real. When we read a really good novel, Gardner says, "We slip into a dream forgetting it's lunchtime or time to go to work." This is what it should be like to walk in wilderness: to dream that you are the first on the scene, even while knowing that you are not. And, just as an author, by careless language, can jerk the reader from this dream, spoiling all pleasure in it, so the wilderness dream can be spoiled by stray candy wrappers, rusty tin cans, pieces of foil, any ugly reminder of previous travelers.

Drenched in sunlight from the head down, in dew from the feet up, I am in a kind of dream until the trail dumps us onto a brand new road, so new that straw still litters the right-of-way and surveyors' stakes remain in the crumbly berm. The road has severed the trail in half. Not only in half, it turns out as we continue on, but in thirds, quarters, eighths, sixteenths.

Talk about being jerked from the dream. This is rough footsteps in the night, a banging door, the sound of gunfire.

At first bereft, then infuriated, I pull out a stake and fling it into the road. "Watch me turn into Ed Abbey before your very eyes," I tell Steve. He shrugs, not unkindly. Edward Abbey pulled surveyors' stakes to protest the paving of little-traveled roads in national parks. This situation is quite different. An astronomical observatory, now under construction, lies less than a mile away. The road goes right to it. What did I expect? He reminds me that we are here on sufferance, by right of a special permit.

And it is not long until we reach the Emerald Peak construction site, which looks and sounds much like any other. A chain-link fence, no-trespassing signs, front-end loaders, gravel piles, a house trailer, a water tank, generators, scaffolds, trucks, cranes, welders, hoses. Men in hard hats shout over the burr of motors and the hiss of compressed air.

When completed, the observatory will be operated by the University of Arizona. Right now it is not much more than a circular cement collar with a lattice of steel on top. About eighteen hundred spruce trees were cut down to make room for the observatory. Another thirty-two hundred were removed for the new road. The old road to the top of Mount Graham was not suitable, and the cost of upgrading it was considered too great.

We cross the construction yard feeling conspicuous: the only people wearing packs, the only ones without yellow hard hats. No one challenges us, and we hurry up the trail, pursued by the roar of construction. For a long time it sounds as though we must be near an airport.

WE FOLLOW A LINE of flagging tape to a squirrel monitoring station where we find Paul, the biologist in charge, and two of his assistants. He explains that one of their goals is to mark each squirrel with an ear tag. If they can distinguish individual squirrels, they can learn what the sex ratio of the population is, how many females are lactating, how much territory each squirrel explores for food, how long the squirrels live.

First they must trap the squirrels, though, and this is proving more difficult than expected. Earlier in the year, before wild mushrooms were plentiful, they tried store-bought mushrooms as bait. No success. Now they are using peanut butter, the old stand-by, which works as well as anything. Team members observe the traps all day long, so someone is always on hand to tag and release a squirrel as soon as it is caught.

Paul rummages around in a midden, a hummock of cone scales at the base of a dead fir tree. The middens here are not well-developed, he tells us. Because the spruce trees produce a good cone crop only once every four years, the middens start to decay before they reach a substantial size. He pulls a few dried, black mushrooms out of the midden. The squirrels collect mushrooms throughout the fall and hang them in the trees to dry, then cache them in middens or in snags. Boletes and amanitas seem to be their favorites. In good years, spruce seeds are the staple of their diet, and a squirrel might stash as many as a thousand spruce cones in its pantry. Red squirrels remain active all winter, even with ten or twelve feet of snow on the ground, and without their food caches they would starve.

When the observatory was in the planning stages,conservationists expected that the presence of endangered red squirrels would be enough to stop it. But university administrators, well-versed in the politics of pressure, somehow short-circuited the environmental assessment process. Those of us who cared watched in dismay as Forest Service officials proved oddly passive in shepherding the land and animals under their jurisidiction. We hoped that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, charged with protection of endangered species, could bring the entire project to a halt. The Fish and Wildlife biologists did what they could. They required Coronado National Forest to close the Bible camp near Mount Graham; to evict the residents of Columbine, a nearby hamlet of summer homes; to deny public access to the area above ten thousand feet; to rip all roads—except the new one—within the squirrel refugium.

The conservation community regarded these demands as "poison pills." Surely the Forest Service would refuse to swallow them, and the observatory would not be built. We were wrong. If I was surprised when Forest Service officials agreed to close the Bible camp and the summer homes, I was astonished

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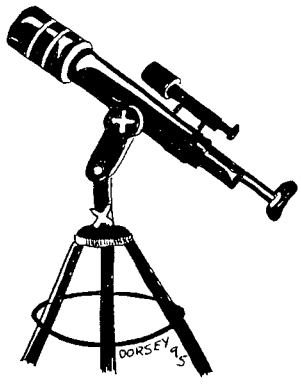
when they ripped up the roads, for the Forest Service loves roads much more than it loves forests.

THE TRAIL ASCENDS by easy stages to Bear Wallow Cienega, a small bog amid the spruce and fir. Sedges and wild onions make a fragrant turf. Moisture seeps everywhere. No matter where we step, the ground sinks underfoot. This is a nivation hollow, a bowl-shaped depression where snow lasts well into the spring. During the summer, the entire hollow becomes a gigantic spring, as if it were a saturated sponge being slowly but steadily expressed. The runoff gradually collects in a single channel, becoming the headwaters of Frye Creek.

Altogether, there are three high-elevation bogs in the Pinaleño Mountains: this one on the flanks of Hawk Peak and two others nearby. These cienegas, unique in southeastern Arizona, are partly a result of topography, partly of the severe winters. Annual precipitation here is about thirty-five inches, sixty percent of it snow.

Paul points out spruce stumps at the edge of the cienega. Some years back, he explains, the Forest Service was concerned lest invading spruce trees turn the cienega to forest, so they cut down many of the big trees at the perimeter. The stumps are broad and flat. I choose a sunny one and sit on it with my knees drawn up while Steve botanizes. Rare wildflowers grow here—white-flowered shooting stars, lady's tresses orchids, marsh marigolds, fringed gentians—and he is as rapt as a fritillary on a thistle.



Like the red squirrels, the marsh marigolds and shooting stars are relicts from a colder, moister time when the arid plains below were as verdant and wet as this cienega is now. Tens of thousands of years ago, spruce forests wrapped the entire mountain, not just its highest peaks, and a red squirrel could have scampered the hundred miles between the Pinaleño and the White mountains without ever coming down from the trees.

AFTER LUNCH, PAUL returns to his monitoring station. Steve and I hike the short distance from Bear Wallow Cienega to the top of Mount Graham, the highest point in southeastern Arizona. As we eat lunch on a smooth log, a small hawk circles around us, showing a checkered tail, then settles at the top of a spruce. It lands elegantly, feet first. As the branch bends underneath its weight, it wavers for a second, then catches its balance. With one fluid motion, it draws its wings down and tucks them in.

"Cooper's or sharp-shinned?" I ask. Hoping to draw it closer, I make loud clucks that are meant to be squirrel-like. The hawk ignores me.

"Make a noise like prey," I tell Steve.

He squeals, "Don't eat me, don't me, don't eat me."

MOUNT GRAHAM IS not so much a peak as a high spot on a long ridge. Here, where the soil is thin and the winter winds fierce, the spruce forest is dwarfed. Only a few plant species thrive under these stringent conditions. Steve, listing everything he sees, finds no more than a dozen. None is rare, much less endangered.

"I can find no botanical reason *not* to put a telescope here," he says.

That may be, I argue, but the best reason not to erect telescopes on this high peak is spiritual, not scientific.

"I have no expertise in that area," he says.

But of course he does. He is embarrassed to talk about it, that's all. Good at assembling objective evidence, scientists are sometimes apt to shrink from matters of the heart. At his heart right now is the plight of this silent forest—the moss, the trees, the stony outcrops, the winds. He wonders aloud if every high peak must bear some human marker: a fire lookout, a gaggle of radio towers, a microwave station, a ski lift, an observatory. Are we to have no mountaintops left unbroken?

I tell him about Robert Leonard Reid, who acted on his boyhood love of stars by submitting an application to Harvard's prestigious astronomy program. He was thrilled to be accepted. "I'd dreamed of intimacy with Andromeda," he writes, "but had always imagined she was unattainable. Now suddenly I had been handed the keys to her apartment!"

The reality was somewhat different. For the next six months he sat at the controls of the telescope, photographing the sky instead of gazing at it. By the time he saw the stars, he writes, "they were white splotches on a sheet of emulsion." The splotches, he was told, represented rotating nuclear reactions converting hydrogen to helium. When he finally left the program, he was sadly disillusioned. He concluded that science had discarded not only sight, sound, taste, touch and smell, but soul as well.

We return to our truck via the ripped road. It is strange to see a road so humped and hollowed and distorted. Steve speculates that a bulldozer dug it up with enormous steel prongs. Walking the road requires a peculiar kind of stutter step, and I feel like I'm wearing a high-heeled shoe on one foot and no shoe at all on the other.

Wild raspberries grow thick beside the roadway. We sample the ripening fruits: every tenth one is sweet and good, the rest insipid or tart. The juncos like them, though, and as we approach, they flee by the dozen from every bush with alarmed rustling of wings. Listening to them, I realize that I do not agree with Robert Leonard Reid. Science is my eyes, my fingers, my ears. It is my window on the world.

But unlike the builders of the observatory, I do not assert that it is my window alone, nor do I shutter the window so that no one else can peer in or out. □

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University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls IA 50614-0516

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Competition

Graphic designers, illustrators, printmakers, and other visual artists (professionals and students) are invited to compete in the illustration or design of the cover of The North American Review. The winning entry will be used as the cover of the March/April 1998 issue of the magazine.

Guidelines

Entries may be carried out in any medium or combination of media, in any colors with the exception of metallic or fluorescent pigments. (No photographs, please.) Entries must be the proportion of the cover of the *NAR* (8 1/8 inches wide by 10 7/8 inches high). To facilitate color separation, the original artwork should measure no wider than 19 inches and no higher than 25. All entries must anticipate the contrast required for the superimposition of the magazine logo across the top portion of the illustration.

All styles of illustration, design and fine arts are welcomed and encouraged. All entries must be the original work of the person who enters the competition. Each person may submit only one entry.

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If You Asked About my Students

MICHAEL ERARD

YOU WERE ASKING about the students I had in Taiwan.

I taught them all, from five years old to fifty. Kindergarteners. Middle school, high school, university students. Businessmen. Rich, bored housewives. Engineers. An eel farmer. A piano teacher. An insurance saleswoman. A fish breeder. Flower farmers. Waitresses. Bartenders. Architects.

I taught mostly kids. Rambunctious little ones fascinated by eggs and dinosaurs. ABCD. Apple, boy, cat, dog. Other creatures in abcdefarium. Eensy-weensy Spider. Patty-cakes. Felt like Liberace playing to deaf mutes. "Be a tree!" Tiny arms wave, as blown by a wind. "Be a dinosaur!" Little bodies stomp, mouths growl. "Be an old man!" Children stoop and stroke their beards. "Be quiet!" Stunning silence until James, the fat one, farts.

Sullen ten year olds forced into bushiban's narrow desks, dutifully performing "This is a ball. This is an egg. This is an elephant." Demonstratives bore. Everyone bored. I wanted to tell them I was too, but didn't. Everyone grouchy. Bare feet on cold concrete.

Half-delinquent all-girls vocational classes that no other teacher wanted. Pretty, lively, hard to handle. Someone thought a good-looking male teacher would keep them interested. Everyone mutually fond, all mildly flirtatious, all worked hard. English didn't improve. "Do you have a girlfriend?" At the end they made me an album, each girl to a page. Hello, Kitty stickers, leaves, magazine photos of a man and a woman in a very serious embrace adhered under clear plastic.

Brilliant seventh graders old enough for adult wisdom and too young to be jaded, who liked to say "shit." I stopped class and made everyone say, girls and boys, one time, "shit." Out of their systems and out of my classroom. And then forward: "The brown stick is under the door. The blue stick is in her hand." Felt like Pete Seeger.

Bushiban kids. I played them Bobby McFerrin. They tapped their toes. Drew bizarre faces on the whiteboard at their direction. Draw five eyes, three ears, two noses. Erase one nose. Drew lines to their directions: up, down, left, right, stop. Laughed a lot. Used a lot of whiteboard markers.

Small groups of eighth graders in a Lutheran high school rotating through my classroom for improvised mountaintop rescue dialogues. None died. First question to me in English: "Do you have a girlfriend?" Second question: "How old are you?" Did the Hokey-Pokey and laughed a lot.

Was given a lesson plan to discuss gun control. It is an irrelevant topic in Taiwan because there are no guns to control. The students weren't silent because they were shy; they just didn't have an opinion. Was given a lesson plan to make sentences with some multipurpose grammatical function word. One kind of sentence was sarcastic. I spent the class period trying to teach sarcasm. They didn't get it.

Quicksands of authority nibbling at my heels. The Lutheran high school was a lush garden dripping with flowers and pools of goldfish. Classrooms had cranky ceiling fans. On low, sounded like jet engines overhead. On high, sounded like in a jet engine. Some Chinese teachers had microphones and tiny portable amps. Sounded like street preachers. I was young, hip, American. No, no, I said, don't stand up at the beginning of class to greet me, don't stand up at the end to thank me. Formality was banal; formality was structure. The result? Bedlam. Once I clipped a napper with a piece of chalk in the ear. Pretty proud of myself. Once I nicked a chatter in the eye. Stopped throwing chalk. Stopped a rude comment when I wowed 'em with my Chinese. On the whole, inconsistent. Couldn't get a good scold out to save my peace of mind. The mistake? I wanted to be liked.

Engineers at a plastics factory. We'd meet for beers in the pub. They insisted and paid. "You have to get rid of your Chinese name," they said. The family name I'd been given was the social equivalent of "Nixon." They changed it to "river." The first name they gave me was something like "Horatio" or "Dunlop." "Oh, that's a very romantic name," people say when I tell them. I remembered that Henry Miller's first English class in France was a lecture on penises of the animal kingdom. His second class was packed. Contemplated the implicit connection between expatriation and teaching language. Turned out, the engineers loved to learn slang, dirty words, racial slurs, sexual epithets, clichés. All the expressions that make idioms worth considering. All the anatomy that gets left out of textbooks as if English lacked the words, as if English speakers lack the physical referents. What's weirder is, nobody notices. I taught them "beaver" and "mash uglies." They taught me the aphorism, "Eating young girls improves the vision." Felt like Howard Stern. Taiwan has six naphtha crackers. Loved "naphtha cracker."

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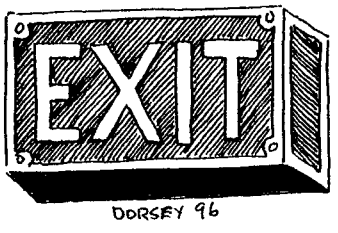
Adult students in bushiban. They hated this exercise. Each student wrote a word on a card. First student picked a card and made a sentence with that word. Second student picked a card and fit second word in original sentence. On and on, until after several rounds, the sentence was a monstrous and poetic piece of nonsense. "God takes the sunrise from the eastern sea and the fishes fearing yesterday's steel-making must dance ballet for exercise." Felt like Noam Chomsky on drugs.

Much of the English taught was monstrous nonsense. One kind of absurdity. Much was exaggerated. Only with exaggeration could meanings stand out, the lines of syntax become clear, sounds distinct. As in Dr. Seuss. Much was repetitive and stale. "The ceiling is up. The floor is down." Another kind of absurdity, almost patronizing. As Ionesco noted.

Two girls in a small town, Botzliao. Had class in a huge empty room on the third floor over a restaurant. My first students. On the second day, I diverged from the progressive tense to a comparison of Chinese and Western culture through absences of corresponding verb tenses. They were very confused. I just hadn't known that teaching English was going to be so exceedingly boring. Felt like Benjamin Lee Whorf at the time. In retrospect, feel like Whorf on drugs.



Never slept with a student. Deep, deep ethical quicksand. I dated my Chinese teacher. Then she wasn't my teacher. More effective, however. "Dunlop River, Dunlop River," she would repeat when we made love.

The prettiest student was a girl named Palan, too beautiful even to fantasize about. That, and she was fourteen years old. Golden smooth skin, red cheeks, phoenix eyes, ears just perfectly too big. Then, of course, there was Cherry, an insurance saleswoman, with swift English and broad vowels. Implausibly West Coast. She was getting married to a doctor. Sure, we flirted. He was the best friend of the bushiban owner, Henry, a small dark man whose English had acquired a non-native spray of saliva on some consonants, who was frustrated because his wife wouldn't get pregnant. But a good guy. He taught the basic class at the plastics factory. We'd break, and I'd hear him intoning from the textbook. "What did you talk about today?" he asked. "Fishing," I said.

The first time someone shows up to check out an adult bushiban class is always a chore. Sometimes they won't talk. They've overestimated their ability. Sometimes they're arrogant little snits. Or they won't take their faces out of the dictionary. Or a man flirts with Cherry across the table. She laughs, her loud throaty laugh. I steamed. At her wedding, she was duded up like a doll and got so drunk you could have pushed her over. I was so drunk from toasting Henry that if you'd asked me to fall over, I would have.

The handsomest man was perhaps Tony. He and his wife grew freesia, tulips, and carnations in low cloches in the mountains. He was dark from the sun and had fast small eyes and fine features. His hands were busted and hard from work. He talked slow, like a farmer. Wanted to say so much but couldn't.

The richest students were Danny and Horace. They preferred bowling to class. They insisted and paid, then made it back from me by betting on strikes. They were some species of businessmen. Vague. Danny owned a kindergarten where his nickname was Uncle Happy. He played the part in front of the kids; in his office he smoked like a mogul. Other teachers trolled for gifts and received cameras, vehicles, appliances from their rich students. I never trolled and never got lucky.

The saddest one was Huey. Wanted desperately to hang out with me. I mentioned homosexuality in relation to the movie "Maurice." He became paralyzed that he was gay, and he "had this sickness." He'd tried to kill himself the year before with pills. He pleaded for some way to become normal. He swore to jump in front of a train. He came up the dark stairway in Melissa's house where we had class. He had something too horrible to say. He turned, said "I love you," and ran down the stairs. Later he sent a note condemning me to hell. Felt like no one I'd ever heard of. Like some kind of missionary, I suppose.

By the end, I had taught perhaps 3000 students total. A dozen reasons for studying English between them. And not a single one angry about having to do it. Not a single one with a question about it. Naïve or reticent or practical, I don't know. "English is a tool for international communicating" is propaganda they would repeat.

The smartest student was Lily, nine years old, fast and sharp and bright. She and four others, sheer beginners, a private class. I sat them behind a line of masking tape on the carpet and shut them in tape enclosures. Edges held. We named every object in that small room. We counted round-robin to one hundred one day. They ordered each other around the room like little generals, with perfect syntax like Fabergé eggs. I felt we could expand through the house with the arms of our widening English, down the street, into the city, and then out into that world from the room, learning words. Soon they'd be fetching orchids and describing sunsets. I felt so successful, I almost cried.

I'm sorry I left Lily. Of all the ones, I'm sorry I left her. I lied to her mother. Said I was coming back to America to visit my parents. Mrs. Wong called my parents' house and asked when I was coming. I lied and said I'd just decided to stay. She said that if I ever wanted to return, the kids would be there. She said, Lily asks when you are coming back.

You asked about my students. Of all of the students I had, I think only of Lily, waiting. □

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WILLIAM FRANCIS BISBEE

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ENTROPY

A Story by Don Shea

Police Detective Kevin Reilly was dreaming he was at his condo on the west coast of Florida, out on the tidy patio off the screened Florida room, barbecuing some kind of pork in the red eye of the sun, and as the dream slid into the actual morning he woke to the smell of frying bacon. Through the open bedroom door, across the hall, he could see his wife, Mary, standing in her bathrobe at the white stove in the white painted kitchen of their Queens apartment.

Ten minutes later, he eased his 190-pound bulk into a kitchen chair. "Budget's done," said Mary, as she poured his first cup of coffee.

Detective Reilly had trained Mary to keep the household budget after he realized that her somewhat undisciplined spending was less a question of willfulness than a lack of any concept of financial management. Mary was frightened at first by what she had always understood to be a male prerogative, but in time she grew proud of the neat ledger she presented to him each month, headed by his paycheck, followed by their expenses, and ending, usually, in a small surplus they either saved or spent on something frivolous.

Detective Reilly ran his eye down the ledger Mary handed him.

"Little over," he said.

"More coffee?"

"Where's the difference?"

"Insurance premium on the condo. Plus the VCR repair. That's most of it."

"Jesus, one-sixty on the VCR. Why not buy a new one?"

"We talked about that."

Detective Reilly's remarks and questions and Mary's responses fell into the familiar and comfortable ritual of the stern boss who is privately pleased with his or her subordinate's performance but cannot fully acknowledge this. Detective Reilly had a secondary source of cash from the precinct pad, about $1,200 a month. With day-to-day expenses under control, he used the extra cash as a cushion against emergencies and a source of funding for personal indulgences such as the occasional fresh faced, just-off-the-bus-from-Minnesota farm girl whore or his smuggled Cuban cigars with a scent as rich and powerful as a woman's musk. (This money also provided guilt-relieving gifts for Mary, who, being a bright woman, was aware of his second income but never mentioned it.)

After his third cup of coffee, he removed his first cigar of the day from its aluminum screw tube and carefully notched the tip. He rolled the cigar under his nose savoring the smell, but did not light it till he walked out the front door because Mary would not permit smoking in the house. The five to six cigars he consumed each day helped him maintain a certain judicious distance from the grotesque events and scenes routinely offered up by the New York City Homicide Bureau in the course of his work.

Driving into Manhattan, smoking his first cigar, Detective Reilly stopped at a red light next to a brother with a boom box blasting out a song by Dana Dealer and her Bitchcraft band. Detective Reilly knew this song, titled 'Eat My Feet'. In fact, he knew all her music. Five years ago, when he was working narcotics, he had raided the apartment of a society dealer on the lower East side and she had happened to be there at the time. He arrested her, but treated her with deference and respect, and he liked to think she appreciated this, although in truth she scarcely acknowledged him. Her lawyer had her out in an hour, but Detective Reilly continued to dine out for years on the story of arresting Dana Dealer, the famous rock star, embellishing the tale here and there to suggest more intimacy, more of a personal exchange with her. It was his secret conceit, his link, however tenuous, to the rarefied world of top entertainers and rich superstars.

"You've had quite a number of jobs."

The immediate problem was the song, flooding Lyle's mind with images of dark hair and sucking lips, breaking his concentration, and he knew that concentrating was part of his responsibility in the present situation, part of his end of a very bad bargain called trying to maintain a life of dignity. Was that a question he was just asked? Was he supposed to answer? He tried to smile, managed a grimace, then realized that smiling might not be the right response.

"Yes," he said, and instructed his facial muscles to remain motionless as he made what he considered appropriate eye contact with the moonfaced man across the desk.

The office they occupied squatted in the rear corner of the A&P next to the loading dock amid the mulchy smell of vegetables and decaying scraps of meat. The soft rock song, still playing on a radio somewhere outside the office, had triggered an involuntary automatic shift in Lyle's focus from the carefully crafted Q and A volley he was trying to engage in with this prospective

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employer to the evening a dozen years ago, shortly after his eighteenth birthday, when the woman singing the song on the radio had gone down on him in the front seat of a borrowed car parked on a quiet side street in the Bronx. Wild at heart, generous of spirit, she was, at that time, just a neighborhood girl with a rep. And though his few dates with her had been directed with callow single-minded purpose toward the very act she was now performing with patience and good will, he found himself unable to complete; he was finally both furious and abjectly apologetic. He didn't call her again.

Years later, after she changed her name to Dana Dealer, after her all-girl rock band, Bitchcraft, made the cover of *Rolling Stone*, he tried to contact her. Her phone number and address were unavailable and she did not respond to the letter he sent to her recording company. He went to one of her concerts, pushed his way to the front, forced eye contact. He was certain she saw him and recognized him but she did not smile or take any further notice of him. After the concert, her security guards kept him from getting anywhere near her.

"These letters are more than two years old. Where have you been working recently?"

Every time Lyle saw Dana Dealer on MTV or heard her on the radio his thoughts shifted immediately to his failure in the front seat of that car. He had richly detailed fantasies about meeting her by chance and striking up a friendly conversation and then somehow rekindling that lost moment and getting her to try again and having no trouble this time, no trouble at all.

"Are you still with me, Mr. Strand?" Moonface asked this gently, without apparent rancor.

"Yes," said Lyle. "Yes. Well. I've been unemployed. There's a recession out there," he spoke with what he perceived to be a correct blend of irony and assertiveness. He considered tipping moonface a wink, then decided that this familiarity might not be well received.

Moonface sat silently, apparently considering him. He did not look particularly happy. Lyle began to feel scrutinized, then decided to bring matters to a head.

"I am a college graduate," he said. "I have management experience. I am the best candidate you will find for this job. I want the job."

"Perhaps you're overqualified."

"I am not overqualified."

Moonface kept *looking* at him. Lyle began to twitch. What's wrong with him, he thought. He's staring at me like I was a goddamn *bug*.

Moonface smiled, as if he had decided something. He leaned toward Lyle.

"Would you consider a temporary position in produce, keeping the shelves stocked, till we can get a sense of you with the employees and customers? Working with fresh vegetables can be very soothing and pleasant."

"Don't fuck with me."

"Mr. Strand, I . . ."

"Did you read those letters? I am a manager."

"Of course you are, it just that . . ."

"Your ad says 'night manager'."

"That job is taken."

"When? In the last fifteen minutes?"

"I think this interview is over."

"Damn right it's over. Moonfaced turd."

Moonface rose from behind his desk.

"I think you better go."

"I'll go, all right," said Lyle rising. "I'll go all over you." He motioned as if to unzip his fly and Moonface jumped back from his desk.

Outside, when he stopped hyperventilating, Lyle looked at the next address. It was a large Duane Reade drugstore not far from the one bedroom apartment where he lived with his wife, Jane.

Jane grew up in a small town on a flat Midwestern plain where the sense of community was strong enough to indulge a degree of quirkiness in the citizenry. When she was young, her intense enthusiasms and her "quiet periods," as her mother called them, were generally accepted as little more than the seasonal moods of a sensitive and intelligent child. At the State University, however, without the support or loving restraint of family and community, her mood swings became dangerously disruptive. Her enthusiasms blossomed into excesses—200-page papers written in sleepless bursts and filled in equal measure with insights and chaos, or one-night-stands with strangers whose perceived merits, like their corporeal selves, tended to fade with the dawn light. And her "quiet periods" came to be spent almost entirely in bed with the shades drawn, in a semiconscious state during which she would lose up to a week of classes and 20 pounds in body weight.

She was diagnosed in her sophomore year. After graduation, she chose to teach at a school in New York City because she wanted a fresh start where no one knew her history.

Jane was an attractive young woman, slender and small-boned, with bright eyes and an alert, birdlike expression. One night she caught Lyle Strand's eye in a singles bar. He sensed immense vulnerability, which drew him like a magnet. A year later they were married.

Lyle managed everything, which was what initially attracted Jane because her own life seemed so chaotic. Managing the details allowed Lyle the saving illusion of control. Jane eventually understood this, and learned never to argue with Lyle's judgments or decisions, even when it seemed he was managing them into deeper and deeper trouble or managing every ounce of joy out of a potentially happy occasion.

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Lyle chose Jane's clothes, the red dress she wore Christmas day, the conservative navy suit she wore to court. When people didn't play by the rules, Lyle sued them, mostly in small claims court, and she always showed up wearing the navy suit to make a good impression.

Lyle began each day with the best of intentions and what seemed to him to be reasonable expectations only to encounter people and events as pockets of *disintegration,* forever gouging and staining and littering the smooth surface of his life, forcing him to correct and adjust and *clean up* after everyone else.

Lyle often reminded Jane that she didn't have to be part of the problem. She wholeheartedly agreed, and tried in every way to promote order in their lives and bolster his self-esteem starting with the essentials, which included a posture of sexual submission and the keeping of an absolutely immaculate house.

At age 30, Jane was on permanent partial disability leave from the New York City School system. She had adjusted to her condition as people will adjust to anything. She called her states of mind 'heaven,' 'hell,' and 'here' and she called the journeys between them 'the ride' and 'the slide,' the ride being toward heaven and the slide toward hell.

She had a shorthand for these states which she used on the few occasions when other people were around and she needed to alert Lyle to an impending change. She called heaven 'H-1,' here 'H-2,' and hell 'H-3.'

Jane felt great ambivalence toward the drug prescribed to stabilize her blood salts and sugars. It was a powerful drug that left her without affect when it worked, and for this reason she privately resisted the establishment of a dose that would reliably stop the journeys and keep her grounded, keep her 'here,' although she professed to be seeking such a formula to keep the peace with Lyle. For Jane, the flat state of here, while preferable to the tortured and depressive state of hell, offered none of the *frisson* that attended a quality life, a life worth living. She compared it to eating a stale Saltine cracker—still identifiable for what it was, but lacking any bite, texture or savor.

The upward current, when it gripped her, had its own dangers. Her celestial ascents had taught her that heaven itself was too rich a state to dwell in for any length of time. Heaven was an ongoing explosion of color and sensation and overflowing well-being best savored in small doses. Its intensity made her behave in ways that appeared bizarre or childlike to those who had never fully tapped into the transcendent joy that lay like a geologic stratum just above (or was it below?) the terror and tedium of everyday life. (Once, en route to heaven, she ran up a very high long distance bill calling various world leaders to share urgent insights regarding the path to world peace. After that, Lyle started unplugging and removing the phone receiver when he left the house.)

What Jane really wanted, what she could never admit to Lyle or anyone else, was to stay on the ride forever, to be always *approaching* and *anticipating* heaven, but never quite arriving.

Lyle's father was a low-level civil servant, remote when sober and volatile when drunk. His mother was remote all the time. His childhood was a mean, pinched affair that left him without dreams. He took a business degree at City College and then commenced a series of short duration, entry level jobs for retail stores and restaurants. He was intelligent enough and clean cut if undistinguished in appearance, and would usually do well at first by dint of raw effort, dependability, and uncompromising attention to detail. He would then be promoted to a supervisory job, but no one could work for him, no one could bear his incessant perfectionism and micro management. Shortly after his promotion he would be fired, often with a letter of recommendation to the next employer, a letter attesting to his intelligence and zeal.

Lyle's employment string ran out abruptly with the business at Carvel. He had taken a job as night manager of a Carvel outlet in the Bronx. One evening he was serving a cone to a kid. Vanilla, with chocolate sprinkles. He leaned through the window and handed the cone to the kid, a wiseass twelve year old, who took it and shoved it quickly up into Lyle's face.

Lyle reared back, cracking the top of his head on the service window. As he stood, swaying, his face dripping blood, ice cream, and sprinkles on the counter top, the kid and his friends danced and taunted him from the asphalt parking lot beyond the window.

Later that evening, Lyle went looking for the kid and spotted him in a McDonald's a block away. Lyle cornered the kid and hit him in the face twice, very hard, breaking his nose and knocking out his front teeth. There were plenty of witnesses, and the consensus was that whatever the provocation might have been, this was a grown man hitting a child, deliberately, and with great force.

Lyle was fired and couldn't find another job. He spent their $4,000 savings on legal expenses and medical claims connected with the incident, and still owed more than $6,000 to the lawyer and the child's family. Jane took on some typing and proof reading from a law firm, work she could do at home on a piece basis.

Jane sensed that striking the twelve year old boy represented a significant departure for Lyle. It seemed to release something in him. He had once told her he considered physical force vulgar and that if he ever had to strike her, which is to say, if she ever provoked him to

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such an extreme, he would undoubtedly also have to leave her. But sometimes she thought she would prefer the simplicity and directness of physical blows to the things he was beginning to do around the house with his idle time.

Like the hole in the wall. One day she came home with an armful of legal briefs and found he had taken a sledge hammer and bashed a hole in the wall between the living room and the kitchen. He said he intended to install a shelf that could be used for passing food from the kitchen, a little window like you see in some apartments. But he never did finish the job and put in a shelf. It remained just a big, jagged hole in the wall that leaked plaster dust which she vacuumed up every day.

The hole was set at a height and angle that allowed him to watch her in the kitchen from his favorite TV chair in the living room. He said he liked watching her, liked knowing where she was and what she was doing.

The bathroom door upset her more than the hole in the wall. When he took the lock and latch off the bathroom door, he told her that after six years of marriage, there was nothing they should have to hide from one another. The only place in the apartment she had ever felt truly safe and relaxed had been in the bathroom with the door locked. The door frame was slightly askew, and with the lock and latch gone, the door swung open. She found that she couldn't reach quite far enough with her leg to hold the door closed while sitting on the toilet.

He often walked by when she was in the bathroom. He would stop and look at her, wordlessly.

She used to linger and luxuriate in the bathroom. Now, she was very quick.

All of these things made Jane want to try hard to stay in the 'here' state, the safest state, the state that was least likely to provoke Lyle, who could be angered equally be inertial depression and blind euphoria. But if remaining 'here' was safe, it also diminished her perspective to little more than flat indifference, and on the same April morning that Lyle was having his unsuccessful interview with the moonfaced manager of the A&P, Jane felt a gentle lift, as if a pair of angels had taken her arms gently from behind and blown their soft, warm breath on the back of her neck, and she knew she would soon have to make a decision. Then she felt the beginning of the ride coming on like a sexual rush, felt as if she were spreading her thighs and straddling a hot ice cream highway and riding the thick core of it up toward the stars, and she found she was completely disinclined to suppress this feeling by tampering with her blood chemistry. It was a sunny day in the high 60s, a day of bright shimmering clarity, and she decided she would keep this transcendent welling glory a *secret* for a few more hours before taking one of the "zombie pills," as she called them, to curb her rampant joy before Lyle got home.

But how should she spend this special, secret, joyous time? Suddenly it struck her that going out shopping was the perfect way to spend the first hour or so, and she would not let her enthusiasm be dampened by financial constraints though she had less than twenty dollars in cash. (Lyle had canceled her credit cards two years ago after she charged $8,000 in toys one afternoon at F.A.O. Schwartz in a frenzy of happiness over what turned out to be a false pregnancy.)

Jane walked the sidewalk with a jaunty step and a wide smile. "What I want," she said, "is a *selection* of products so I can choose the things I want the *very most*." She nodded to her right and left as she walked along saying these things, although there was no one to hear her. Her brain was fizzing with joy.

She turned the corner and entered the Duane Reade drugstore. As she walked up the first aisle, the first thing that caught her eye was the first thing she saw: a quart bottle of orange tinted mouthwash. She turned to the stock clerk working the aisle beside her.

"This stuff contains a powdered root that really works against plaque," she said brightly. "I saw a news story about it. Three years ago plaque got the best of me and a dentist removed a major portion of my gum tissue to get at the rot underneath. It cost my husband thousands. I never want *that* to happen again, and this product helps to preserve my remaining gum tissue."

Jane continued down the aisle without waiting for a response. She reached for a dry stick deodorant.

"This has a pleasing, fresh scent and comes in a sensuous oval tube," she said, looking around for someone to address. "Two short efficient strokes coat each pit for the day. No sharp acidic pungencies escape *my* underarms when I follow this simple regimen."

Laughing out loud at her cleverness, she turned the corner and proceeded up the second aisle.

"I'm going to give these capsules a try," she informed a woman on her left. "They're an aid to dieting which is directly related to maintaining a positive appearance and upbeat self image. According to the manufacturer, these pills will actually make me *feel less hungry*, thereby helping me to shed a few pounds, which is desirable both cosmetically and from a health perspective."

"Really," said the woman.

"Oh, yes indeed!" she said, pleased to have someone to share her perceptions with. "And a few pounds off might rekindle my husband's sexual interest, which has waned somewhat since he lost his last job."

"Is that so," said the woman, looking away.

"Don't you think all these products are simply wonderful? Look at this package of white plastic garbage bags! Lightweight, smooth, strong and supple, and each

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bag comes with its own little wire strip to tie off the neck! Think how they hide our private little messes, how they shield them from the world!"

"I have to be going," said the woman, moving down the aisle.

"And what about these light bulbs?" asked Jane, following her. "Each one providing literally hundreds of hours of steady, reliable light on demand. At the flick of a switch, these little honeys turn night into day! Pretty impressive for under two dollars!"

"That's very nice, dear," The woman was moving more quickly now.

"You know," said Jane, following behind the woman, "sometimes I think of the time and effort it would take me starting from scratch to come up with even one of these products, even assuming I had the right materials and tools. Then I feel this swell of gratitude toward all the big companies that make all this stuff. I mean, really, I'd never get anything else done if I had to come up with all this stuff myself."

"Leave me alone," said the woman, "or I'm going to report you."

"I'm extremely sorry," said Jane, smiling broadly. "I know that I am sometimes overly enthusiastic. It has been a great pleasure talking to you. I think reds and yellows would suit you well, although, I, personally, am allergic to those colors."

Jane turned abruptly and studied the shelves before her. Every product seemed desirable, indeed, essential. It seemed impossible to choose among them. The wisest course would probably be to purchase one of each.

Except for the absolutely essential items, of course, where it would be prudent to purchase several.

She began to fill her shopping cart. She moved with efficiency and purpose.

"My approach is democratic, if not to say catholic," she said aloud, then giggled. At the periphery of her consciousness she was aware that Lyle might find fault, might question some of her selections, but this concern seemed very remote at present.

In a few minutes her cart was full to the point where items were beginning to slide off over the sides. She pushed it carefully toward the station near the checkout where she could pick up another cart. She had a long way to go—she had only shopped one aisle—but she was feeling supremely energetic and confident.

Lyle decided to walk the twenty-five blocks to save bus fare and he decided to walk at a very brisk pace in an attempt to take the edge off his humiliating exchange with the moon-faced turd at the A & P and prepare his mind for the interview with Mr. D'Angelo of Duane Reade. But as he walked, his thoughts kept returning to what he considered the A & P man's bizarre reference to the soothing aspects of working with vegetables. What did he take me for, he seethed, some New Age tofu-sucking hippy freak on the dole who doesn't have the guts or the ambition to manage a goddamn A and fucking P?

Lyle's head was filling with screaming noise. They're taking up my *time!* I am *pissing away my life* dealing with these people! My wife is a *nut case!* I *can't pay the rent!*

Lyle walked faster, but the accelerating pace seemed only to ratchet up the screaming voices already battering his brain.

Jane was having the best day of her life, the best day she could remember or imagine. She was simply overwhelmed by the cheerful ordered abundance of goods available in this late twentieth century American drug/convenience store. She saw—she *experienced deeply*—the specific human need behind each product, and she was immensely, tearfully grateful that this amazing plethora of products had been expressly designed to meet such a wide variety of needs, *important* needs like hunger and illness and embarrassment and pain, needs like cleanliness and comfort and cosmetic assistance. The only thing intruding on her otherwise ecstatic surge of understanding and joy was the color problem. She was starting to notice that the bold, assertive colors associated with some of the products—particularly the yellows and reds—were sometimes disorienting and even threatening. She was considering exchanging some selections for products with packaging done in more soothing colors when she saw Lyle turn into her aisle.

She was at once surprised by the coincidence and thrilled at the prospect of sharing her perceptions with Lyle. She was bursting with insights regarding the depth and pathos of human need and the amazing energy and courage of the thousands of people who produced the products she was selecting, products that made every effort to address every human problem and condition imaginable.

She stepped toward him and smiled in welcome.

Detective Reilly approached the Duane Reade drugstore humming a Dana Dealer song, eased through the door, took a long careful look around, and asked for the manager. A stoop-shouldered, balding man with sagging dark eyes approached.

"Look at this place. Look at this *mess,*" he said. He pointed to the litter in the aisles, the trails of boxes and packages apparently spilled from the shelves. The stuff underfoot looked like a mix of crackers and cereal and vitamin pills.

"This will do it," the man said. "This will cost me my job."

"Okay, Mr. . . . D'Angelo, right? My name is

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Detective Reilly. Let's just take it easy. Let's sit down and you can tell me what happened, okay? Nobody's blaming you for anything."

"Eight years I've worked here. Jesus."

"Okay, take a deep breath. That helps, doesn't it?"

"Guy went *nuts*."

"Slow down. *What* guy?"

"Okay. Guy calls me this morning. He saw my ad for night manager. Says he's a college grad who knows retail, so I told him to come in."

"What's the guy's name?"

"Ah . . . Strand. Lyle Strand. So he shows up and introduces himself and he looks really *tense*, you know? So I figure I'll walk him around first, show him the operation, maybe he'll loosen up a little."

"What time was this?"

"Around eleven. So we're walking by the canned goods and dry food aisle and the guy just freezes. Just stops completely. So I stop and turn around and he's staring at this woman and her shopping carts. Now, the thing is, I've been watching this woman myself, before he came in. I mean, she's been in the store for a while and she's got three, four carts full of stuff and she keeps trying to keep the carts together while she moves around which means she's blocking any aisle she's in, okay? Plus, these carts are really full and stuff keeps sliding off which she picks up and piles back on. So I figure maybe she's buying for a school or something and maybe she could use some help getting organized and checked out and I was just about to go over and speak to her when this Strand guy arrives. So I figure while I'm showing him around I'll ask her if she needs some help."

"Okay."

"Am I telling you too much? Do you want . . ."

"You're doing fine."

"So anyway, Strand looks at this woman and just stops in his tracks and she takes a step toward him with this weird kinda dreamy smile, and he looks at this string of carts she's got and he says, real quiet, are these yours? And she says, lemme get this right, she says *every item* is useful and necessary and all he has to do is *pick* something, anything at all, and she'll be happy to explain why she selected it. She's just standing there smiling and looking real happy. So then he picks up a box of cereal—it was Special K, I'm pretty sure—and he looks at it and he says what about this, can you explain this? And he heaves it at her, really throws it hard, and the box hits her and busts open and cereal flies all over. So then she says *vitamins*, Lyle, that cereal has lots of *vitamins*, and she's just smiling away, and he says what about *these*, and he throws a bottle of Centrum Silver vitamins at her and it hit her in the face and cut her nose and it busted open too. And then he starts throwing everything at her, everything in the carts, cans of tuna and Fleet enemas and toothbrushes, everything, and all the time he's screaming what about *this*, what about *this*, and she's backing away and ducking but she's still smiling and it looks like she's really trying to explain each item as it comes sailing at her but he doesn't give her any time, he just keeps throwing stuff. Then he throws this bottle of mouthwash, it was pretty heavy and it hit her on the side of the head and she fell into the shampoos and lotions and pretty much took everything off those shelves."

"Okay, so what were you doing while all this was going on?"

"That's fair. That's a fair question. I mean, for a few seconds I was just in shock. Then I started yelling at him to quit but he didn't even *look* at me. So then I started yelling for my guys, Frank and Jose. Officer, I'm fifty-seven and I gotta heart condition."

"Nobody's blaming you for anything, Mr. D'Angelo."

"Isat right? You wanna explain to my boss? Dead people and crazies and . . ."

"Okay, so then what?"

"So then she was trying to get up, she was bleeding pretty bad and I was screaming for Frank and Jose and he threw a jar of mixed nuts at her that hit the wall and sprayed all over and she said—I remember this perfectly—she said, they're on *sale*, Lyle, fifty percent *off*, and—I couldn't believe it—she was still *smiling* like she was just having a normal *conversation* with him, and she's dripping blood and covered with cereal and nuts and crap. But he just kept coming and she tripped and fell and she starting saying, it sounded like, H one, H one, over and over while he was throwing this stuff at her. Then Frank and Jose, they were trying to handle this thing right, but when Frank took the guy's arm he turns around and really smacks him one, really cuts his mouth up bad, so then Frank and Jose and even Jimmy, the kid on the register, they all jumped him and the guy just keeps thrashing around and kicking. Took out the condom rack and two shelves of cold remedies. Well, you see what the place looks like. And then Jose got him in a choke hold, you know, just trying to get him to quit. And then after a while he did quit. And then they let him go and he wasn't moving."

"That's it?"

"Yeah, pretty much. Except the woman turns out to be the guy's wife, and she starts screaming when she finds out he's dead. Jesus, what lungs! Anybody left in the store, they beat it when she cut loose. She hadda be sedated to get her in the ambulance."

Detective Reilly sighed. "Some guys just can't deal with it when the little woman blows the budget."

"That's not funny, Officer."

Detective Reilly looked mildly surprised.

"Hey, Mr. D'Angelo. What happened here is a human tragedy. We all know that. I'm just saying I think he coulda handled the situation better, is all."

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Detective Reilly closed his notebook, reached in his jacket pocket, and drew out a slim aluminum tube with ornate embossing.

"Mind if I smoke, Mr. D'Angelo?"

"It's not allowed inna store."

"No problem."

Detective Reilly held the metal tube loosely, his fingers stroking the cool complexity of the embossed design.

He really wanted the cigar. He decided to step outside for a smoke before talking to Jose and Frank.

Dana Dealer lay on her back on a fitted, lavender silk sheet in the middle of her circular, king-sized bed, her glistening dark hair spread out behind her like a fan. She was basking in the spring sunshine pouring through the skylight of her triplex loft while her current boyfriend, Nils, knelt between her elevated hips, supporting her back with his thin, tattooed arms. Nils was a Danish guitar player with fair talent, uncertain ambition, no money, and a handsome blond ponytail. He also had enough of a heroin habit to render him impotent much of the time, and to compensate, he offered Dana long sessions of energetic oral sex enhanced by the metal stud that pierced his tongue.

Dana, in fact, preferred to be serviced in this manner, which was part of her initial attraction to Nils, but this afternoon she was having trouble fully connecting. She kept losing her momentum, and eventually she closed her eyes and slid into a fantasy wherein Nils was replaced with the image of the beefy Irish detective who had handcuffed her during the drug bust at Lenny's place five years ago. Servile and self-important, reeking of cigar smoke, he was almost apologetic when he put the cuffs on her, and she could tell he was thrilled just to be near her and to be able to touch her in an official capacity. After her release, she considered inviting him over. Her plan was to slap the cuffs on him, wear him out with some hot cop-slave action, and send him on his way, blubbering with humiliation and gratitude.

Although she never acted on the idea, she did indulge the fantasy from time to time as a sexual aid, and it was this fantasy which now pushed her over the top, legs thrashing, as Nils squealed and grunted in sympathetic chorus.

The world drifted back into focus. Dana became aware of a TV newscast from the floor below, and out of the low rumble of sound she distinctly heard the name "Lyle Strand."

She knew a Lyle Strand. Who was he? Some kid from the old neighborhood in the Bronx, no?

There was something unpleasant about the memory, something wrong with that boy. What was it?

She felt too good and too lazy to pursue it. □

CYNTHIA BOSLEY

Funeral

The noise of chairs, the sputter of the grill—
Midnight, the beautiful Lab, is barking,
Midnight's sadness is gone and the trees and trees,
The garble of trees and the prayers in the trees sputter
In the open-versed poems of honeysuckles. Not a swab
Of honey for me but the trees' names and the orphaned breeze
I can't feel nor will ever feel. Above the hovering
Wings, the fluttering that forces the air to move
The fluttering of a soul, the tree flutter,
We have never been more quiet, more surprised,
By the small noise the chairs make when the bodies move,
The sputter of air which becomes speech after we find
What to say, and what we don't say we also leave out of our prayers.
We garble our words and avoid asking for anything,
Though our emptiness is like the suburban lawn,
And our grief is separate for each, our chairs, our trees,
Our dying happens separately, but our small deaths
Are spent together, envying the air for moving.

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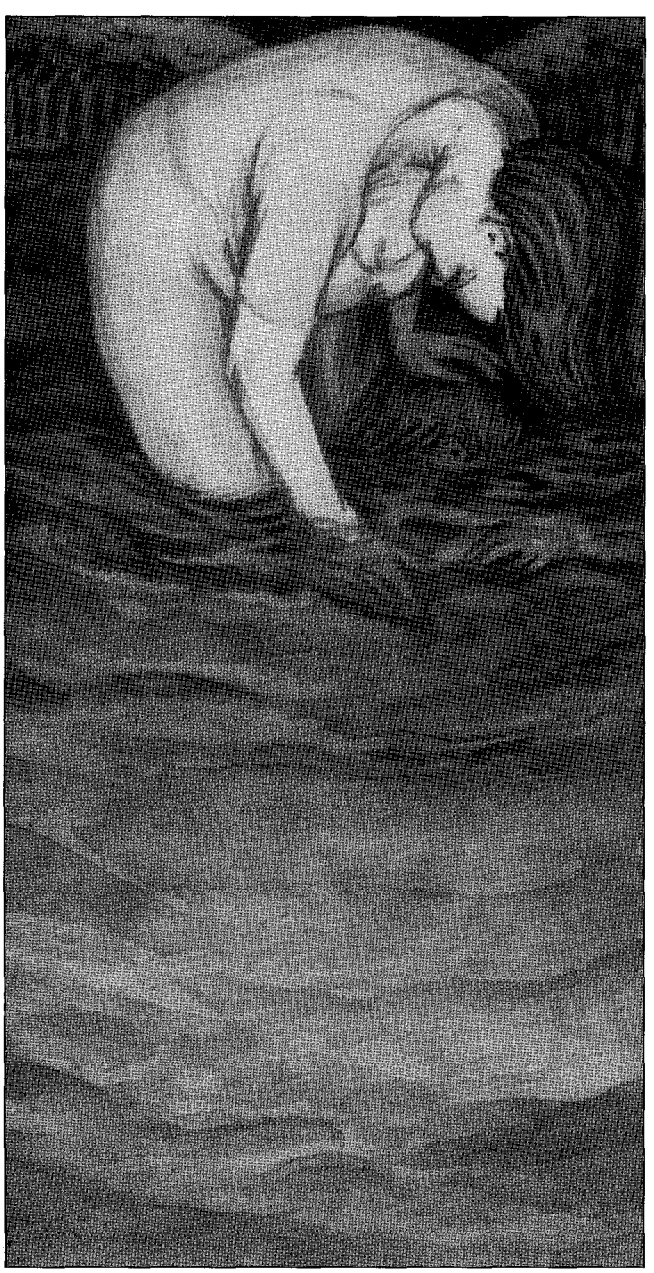
La Llorona

A Story

by Yxta Maya Murray



I could have cooked them up and eaten them with some fine dark wine, a few dry crackers. Like a mad greek goddess, searching out the bones, searching her sons' blank eyes for a last song then gulping them down like that, ferociously.

Instead I fed them to the water. There is a deep, silty river by my house, it is purple black at night with strains of shaded blue like royal velvet beneath the surface. The fish live here, quietly, staring up at the light during the day with their small electric eyes, gulping in the watery air with their fishy mouths opening and shutting, their gills fluttering in the current. You can skim your hand through the force of the water, then plunge it in and feel the hard rushing push as it runs back toward the sea.

A man never knew how angry a woman could be until the very last moment, the last second when he glanced up at her and saw nothing but red, hot volcanoes. How could he love another, with his smooth skin and hard legs, his hands as strong as river rocks, and as soft? A husband is forever, he belongs to you, as do his children. They cannot leave no matter how hard they try, it will turn them into beasts, it will make you into a monster.

I have green gills now, I breathe the water as the fish do, as my children did, living down here at the bottom of the river, caressing myself and remembering.

I was once like you are. I spoke quietly, my head turned down and my mouth bending up slightly into a small smile, satisfied. I cooked warm, spicy meals with meat and rice and beans in them, milk on the table and spirits for my husband after. Putting the children to bed with stories of an Aztec king, a Mayan princess living among jaguars and wild horses, fighting in their bloody wars. My sons would sleep like trees.

What is a woman? A woman is waiting. Waiting for the day to begin and then the lights to dim at night. A woman is praying to God. To think of the things that will happen to you, that you will let others do to you, it is madness. There is a limit to those things, but it stretches on and on, like a desert, like you are dying of thirst in the sandy ocean, seeing nothing all around but a thin, grey line at the horizon.

I have black eyes, big like a deer's. And a nose so sharp it can sniff out a beetle. My hands would have turned into claws if anyone threatened my family, I would have died for them, spread out my body like a blanket, opened to any knife, just to keep them safe, to keep them mine forever. And then the lies came, and I had to protect myself. I had to do the hardest things, and sing and cry and let the heavens know that I was doing them.

My husband began turning away from me in bed. Cold sheets of air between us, between our bodies. A

AMANTHA SAMATIS

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woman may not ask, not ever, she must keep to herself, patient until the time when the man reaches over, when he decides that it is time for love. So I did not ask. I said nothing, only lying there surrounded by the whispering air, my skin lonely, my eyes open all through the night, seeing the black walls, listening to the rats gather their food in the dark corners of our home.

And so I was the dying person in the desert, stretching myself out over the horizon, a vast sheet of skin and blood and bone, of endless hope, of patience. I would wait forever until this time passed, until he would want me again.

Once a woman like me waited until there was no more time. Then she gathered herself like the brown bear, collected all her strength and made a gold ballgown, with fine filigree and a headdress, with jewels on the sleeves and bodice, gold lace, gold petticoat, gold slip, air-spun and weightless. She sat in her small sewing room and bent over the sheets of fine, burning gold, so careful not to tear it with her thin fingers, pulling the needle in and out, the thread only a gold breath, invisible, like the thoughts in her mind.

It was her finest craft. And it was so beautiful on her husband's lover, who had the same shade of hair, the same jewel-tone lips like fine rubies. The girl smiled when she saw her wedding present and offered her body to its fiery cloth, letting it burn her into ash. There were colors then, more than in any art, there was the color of vengeance, blood red and bone-white, and the stinking pull of pale skin folding over.

But I would take my creation home. I would become it. Because it is in the blood, in the soil from where we grow our food, in the black, southern dirt, with our darker skin. The women are only their families, and their husbands and sons feel every drop of them.

He would not have me, he said. He would not have me any more, and he hid his washed hands in his pockets. I looked over at our home with its thick wooden walls, the stone floors, my small garden with the flowers and the herb plants for making teas, the quiet and beauty of the rooms, each holding us like a mother.

I will wait, I told him.

He was gone many nights, and then there was more than a cool sheet of air around me in bed, it was a tornado, and I was sinking. My children still laughed and played out by my garden, squeezing the flowers with their hands, wanting more food, as they grew and widened, expanded into broader, demanding men. I saw how they would only become bigger, how they would grow dark shadows above their lips, their voices getting harder and thicker, their footfalls heavy.

I would pray to God.

The sky will not forgive stones, if you toss one up in the air it will be thrown back to you, harder and faster than before. God is like that, He is like the sky with your stones. He is like an echo, only giving back the same, spare thing, without a sign.

I burnt sage and candles and sprinkled the house with my holy water, purifying myself with it, praying from my books with a low whisper. We have many devices for calling on God. There are the plants to tuck into pillows and to burn in small clay pots, there is starvation, turning from food and water until the day gets clearer, until everything has a crisp, silver outline. You may kill small animals, breathing in the mist from their hot bodies in the morning, leaning over them after your knife has done its work. God may speak with you then, if you are lucky.

But He saw what was in me, what was rightly mine, and He turned away from the sight with the same cool force as all my nights alone in my swallowing bed.

My sons lengthened, their legs stretching out like watered weeds.

I became a mongoose. Secret and moving at night. My skin leathered and my eyes narrowed from sifting through the darkness to see the sleeping world. I burrowed through the dirt faster than a running horse, with my ugly humped back and my spiky dirt-colored fur.

There are deceptions for the quiet ones to see, the small silent animals traveling at midnight. I wandered through my neighbors' homes, splintering their wood floors with my digging claws. I saw how other men take their lovers in different houses, the noise of their sex filling the late sky, sweeter than the simple duty of home. I saw the married women who lay like stone in their sleeping beds. These women were not like me any more.

My husband would return some days, giving me his old smile. He would tell me lies with a slick voice. That he had fallen asleep at a bar, drinking with his friends, playing cards, discussing the new regime. He wanted me to see him there in my mind, on an old wood stool with a cognac, smoking cigars with the other good men. To believe.

But I had hardscrabbled my small, spindly animal body over the floor boards of his new woman's house. With my raw fangs I had nibbled on her linen sheets while they slept, listening to the pace of their breathing, and had seen their breath twining up in the cold night in a pale, lingering fog. His lover is the color of parchment, pale against him.

He would tell me these things, how he had lost track of time with his friends, and I would stare into his flat, familiar face.

He has the look of our lost people, the old bloodlines, with his flint sharp nose and widening cheeks, his

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skin a weathering bronze. We are twins, I used to say, my face mirroring his with the color of an ancient pot buried under the sand. I would smile with my teeth shining out. We are the same.

But now I am dark skinned like the mongoose, like the brown bear, and not like him any longer. I am not like any woman or man, only godless, and I was digging tunnels in the dirt and preying on grasshoppers, small mice. Practicing.

And as with the other woman who sewed night and day to make a beautiful burning gown, there came a day when I saw that all the time in the world would run out. It bled out of me, flowing and rushing out of my body like this river, the night and the day, the dark and the light became the same, and there was only a flat, dank grey to the world. The wind ceased. I could not hear it any more, nor the birds, any laughter or music, and I wondered if I would die, quieter than dust.

Children are their mothers. They can only belong to the women. We kiss their faces and feed them, we know the fresh scents of their heads, their questions. When they will cry. Children belong to mothers, because they are of the same body. They do not become separated from us until a certain age, until they lose that gleam, the shining of their simple, pure faces. When they become like the other people all around.

My sons were still only mine, they were unformed yet and simple minded. And they were the only path to my wandering husband, who was reaching past me faster and farther. I could barely see him then, only the top of his head down the road, and I knew it would be over soon, that I would fold into the earth with no more sound.

Women are weak like glass. Life will offer them only few gifts, a drawer full of trinkets. The memories of our children, of our husband and our home, the scent of a clean room, a fine meal. They will be offered for a handful of years, and then they are gone.

And so I brought my sons to the edge of the river bank, stroked their beautiful heads, their ink black hair and sturdy frames, and whispered into their ears of my love for them. They reached for me with their small hands, curved like beach shells. I saw that my own hands against their gleaming heads were starving, the meat shrunk away, only a few sticks and a layer of bark, and I remembered my husband with his clove skin, his lover's white face.

My sons did my bidding then, and swam under the river with the strength of a shark, their faces becoming its same grey color. They asked no questions, only smiling up at me until the very end, the sounds of the water rushing and their raised cheeks, letting me fold them into the murk, into the cold water like the sky in the dark night. My arms were like iron, my teeth set in a stone line while I plunged them in, and I shrieked to the sky with all the sound of the wind and the roaring ocean, all the music of rain. I thought I might grow blind, with the black water in my eyes, my hair wet ropes like eels, and the thick feel of silt on my face as I tried to swim too.

At the river bed there are the copper coins that the children throw in for luck, and the small sucking bottom fish and tangled feathery plants. The men and the women refuse to come near, they whisper about what I did. How my husband fell ill with the news of me, of our sons, how he cried and screamed just as a woman would, a woman with a heart in her. He would kill himself, he said, and I held my breath at this news, waiting and watching at this small shore. Then he came and took our sons away from me, he dredged up their hard bodies, their little heads with their open eyes and mouths, their few baby teeth showing. He showed no fear as he did this, but I let him feel my presence, the ice of it, as I draped my shadowy body over his and laughed into his ear.

But men live. They live without the blood running through them to keep them alive, somehow they stay on the earth to walk and work and eat and sleep just like before, only now their eyes are round and blank like eggs. My victory was small, taking life from the living, but he could not smile again with the memory of us.

There was that day when all the time poured out of me like the ocean, and now time feeds in and out of me the same as the wind, winding its way down my spine, through my fingers, it wraps its thick cloak about my body. I sit by this river and sing out loud, so that my boys might hear me, so that my husband will stop what he is doing and look up, a dazzled look on his face.

Women are weak but now I am the strong one, here in the river with the sucking fish. The townsfolk say that I hated men, that I would kill all men and boys with a cutting smile, my hands like scythes. The women cluck their tongues when they hear my singing, calling me *bruja*, *llorona*. They tell their own sons to behave, to not wander, warning them that I will kill them with my knife and tear them with my big teeth. I am the rumor now, the thing that they will whisper about, and I torture them with my songs, my voice a low violin, a grand piano, a symphony full of men in tuxedos, their heads bent over their instruments, their eyes closed.

The dirt on the river bank is green and dust brown, it is wet with the river water, a thick muck where I sleep. I will sing the people my songs, and I appear to them, dressed in green plants and old skirts, my hair these wild

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wet ropes around my breasts, wrapping my hips, coiling my legs like snakes. I see my old friends' frightened white-egg eyes, their open mouths, and I love to hear them speak my name out loud in the living world. But there are the times when I will remember and cry, seeing the grey faces of my two sons like stone, their teeth like pebbles just showing out of their open mouths, as they were with me that small while, here at the bottom of the river.

It shadows my joy, a dark bog, when I remember the time before I was a mongoose, when I could not yet become a jaguar, a muskrat, a beetle. Before I could make myself heard as the thunder is and have the whole sky tumble down like weeds. I felt different then, I could let my hands linger on my husband's back, I could kiss him below his hair, my children would rush to me, like the water does. Those pictures are my ghosts now, haunting me as I will haunt all of you.

I would have a war here. If I could summon men I would bring them here with their pistols and their drums, and they would fight before me and die only for my amusement, waving their silly flags and their trumpets. I know the world works like that. But here at the marshy river my voice only carries into a few small homes, my legend travels a short distance, and the small brown fish and the spiders, the plants and the flies around me are my only family now.

They say I hate all the men and the small boys, that I drowned my sons here and will walk along this bank until the sun dies, singing and crying like a hard wind. If I could have done it again, I would have been a cannibal, eating them all like lunch. If my husband had given me a daughter I would have forced her in me like that, even harder than I tucked my sons under the lapping water. I would want to breathe in the air with her same nose, her same lungs, to see the clouds with the eyes I imagine she would have had. I would want to take them all in, my husband, my sons, my daughter, one by one until they were gone. □

KEN FONTENOT

Girl With Cat

In the window across the street
there is a face everyone would recognize:
a young girl holding her cat, looking out.
The sun almost gone. Her face darkens.
Perhaps she has already touched her own blood.
It would be nearly that time.

She recalls a prayer she said
to herself as a ten-year-old.
May my life be given a chance
to know a safety only God knows.
Serious, but intuitive.
More undaunted, more unpredictable
than any prayer of someone this young.

And the cat: captive, willingly so.
A beast too poor to own
more than one suit of clothes.
Fire-red, it licks her fingers,
so that she is a bit startled
at its sandpaper tongue.

What dreams of her her parents have,
assuming she will live
the better part of a century.
What patience the sun has, planning yet
another appointment for tomorrow.

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Cal is the Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse as he rides in from the blasted corn fields. He wears beige chaps over his jeans, a denim jacket, a grey feather in the band of his stetson. His horse is jet black with a blanket of fine white stars on its hindquarters. Lindy watches from the back porch of the farmhouse. Here comes The End of Expectation, she thinks, and limps back to the kitchen.

It's the dead of winter, and Cal brings it in with him as he walks into the kitchen. His arms around Lindy's waist are frozen corn stalks, his breath on the back of her neck the North wind. There is a frost on his lips as they touch her hair, her cheek. She can smell snow in his essence. It rises from him in the invisible shower that tumbles over Lindy and almost makes her wistful.

She is opening a large jar of beetroot she prepared and put away last July. It will brighten up the supper of honey-glazed chicken and roast potatoes already cooking in the ancient oven.

"I remember when your nails were that color," Cal says, reaching past her to pick up a slice of bleeding beetroot with his fingers. He slips it between his lips with all the solemnity of a communicant taking the blessed bread. "Tastes like love," Cal murmurs into Lindy's golden hair.

Night at the farm is a lesson in silence. Here, Lindy half-thinks, half-dreams, silence comes in degrees. There is morning silence, the early hours when silence is a calmness of breathing, sighing, broken only by the rooster and the first waking sounds of Cal. Day silence is a gentle hum of clock ticking, the wheels of cars and tractors rolling down the main road, the wind in the fields. Night silence is absolute, unbroken, so heavy it has a feel, a color. It is more than black, darker than midnight, tangible as smoky air or cobwebs weighed down by a summer dust storm.

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Cal is comatose after love. Having taken the little death to its extreme, he is content to submit to its morphic depths. Lindy lies beside him, alert with the energy Cal's strokes have given her, unable to close her eyes as he has and accept that it is time to sleep. She knows she loves him, she has told him so with her body and her words, but she is not content to sleep on it.

Night is also the worst time for the pain. It starts around Lindy's right thigh, a dull throb that eats its way up and down her once-shattered femur. It gets worse the longer she stays in one position, culminating in a stabbing, burning sensation that, in the silent night, becomes a sound.

ALONZO MORGAN

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:nd of Expectation

A Story by S. S. Barrie

"It's a hissing sound," Lindy tells her doctor, but she knows his opinion on that.

No more pain pills, he says. Just be thankful we didn't have to amputate.

Snow greets Lindy on rising. There is a small white drift on the floor beneath the window Cal left open last night. Lindy draws on her housecoat and steps stiffly across the mini drift. She glances out the window and is surprised to see great banks of snow rippling across the back garden and far fields. With the early sun shining brightly, it looks like an arctic tundra out there. But it's still virgin, unsullied by whatever passes for camels in these parts. Lindy glances back at Cal in bed and wonders what he will make of the unexpected fall.

"Good thing I brought in that late wheat," Cal says when he finally makes it downstairs for a coffee. He is more to Lindy's liking when unshaven, slightly rough around the edges. She still cracks at the sight of his unbrushed hair, the way it stands up slightly over his crown and gives him the look of a startled bird.

"My pumpkins are ruined," Lindy sighs.

"The price of the wheat will more than cancel out the loss," Cal says. He reaches for her when she limps past him to the stove. Despite the heaviness of her right leg, she manages to evade his grasp.

"I wanted that money for something," Lindy says as she puts some bread into the toaster. "I think it's time to redecorate."

Cal looks more surprised than ever. "Redecorate what?"

"This house," Lindy says, gesturing towards the plain pine of the kitchen floorboards, the ancient cupboards with faded stencilling, the stove a hundred shades darker than its original bright white. "We live in a museum."

This is a subject that pushes the ever-genial Cal close to bad humor. Lindy knows this, has known it from the start, has spent hours agonizing on the right way to tell him that Edwardian sofas and Victorian wall finishings depress the hell out of her.

"This house is the living memory of an entire family," Cal says, and brings his fist down hard on the kitchen table. "It can't be changed."

"Even if it upsets me?"

"Honey," Cal says, his voice softer. He rises, takes Lindy in his arms, pulls her close. "You'll grow to love it as I do. You'll understand our place in this house one day. And the low chairs have been a help since your accident, haven't they?"

Low chairs, Lindy thinks as she pulls out of Cal's grasp. Had I been quadriplegic, he'd have happily strapped me into his grandmother's Victorian recliner and fed me porridge.

April has been Lindy's best friend since childhood, and was Lindy's Maid of Honor at the wedding. After Lindy's marriage, April sold the house they shared in town and opened a saloon out where the main highway splits into back roads. April became owner, bartender and confessor to the legions. And it was April who served the whisky to the driver who hit Lindy's car head-on just two weeks after the wedding.

April knows Lindy doesn't hold her responsible. Whatever grudge may lie between them rests in April's disapproval of Lindy's choice of husband. But even that doesn't stop Lindy from visiting April's establishment. Not even an unexpected blizzard can keep them apart.

Cal doesn't like Lindy visiting the saloon. He is old-fashioned enough to think that women and alcohol don't mix. Look at your accident, Cal says. But he doesn't mention the fact that Lindy was perfectly sober, on her way home from shopping, and the other driver was the one who'd been doing tequila slammers since lunchtime.

April's bar is empty when Lindy walks through the front door. The juke box in the corner is playing D.I.V.O.R.C.E.

April spins around on her barstool, a guilty grin on her pretty face. "Just thought it would be funny," she says.

Lindy gives her the ritual hug and almost-slap. "Maybe you want my man?"

"Any man but that one," April laughs. She pushes a cup of steaming coffee towards Lindy. "This'll melt the chill."

Lindy takes a sip of the hot liquid. It slides down her throat like molten lava.

"You're limping worse than ever," April says.

"It's the cold. Cal left the window open last night and we got half the storm in our bedroom."

"Are you going to see the doctor about your leg?"

Lindy shakes her head. "It's the pins. When the air gets cold they feel like icicles in my thigh. It's normal."

"Not to suffer like that," April snorts. "Pain isn't normal, girl. When are you ever going to learn?"

The answer, Lindy thinks as she watches April serve

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some new arrivals, is never. No point in hitting a dead dog over the head. Cal's the dog. Lindy's leg is the battering ram. But Cal's dead to the past, except where it concerns his family honor. And Lindy's accident was yesteryear, unimportant in the scheme of things to come, a minor hitch in a lifetime plan.

I'm still on his map, Lindy tells herself. Just a little less important than I used to be.

"The thing is," April continues as she passes with the coffee pot, "he never gets mad. How can you stay with someone who's happy all the time?"

"Better glad than mad," Lindy says. She thinks of Alice Redmond, a quiet woman who lives out on the lake edge. Alice's husband has a car repair business in the back yard, and when he's not hammering car panels he's hammering Alice. The Redmonds live a good three miles from Lindy and Cal but sometimes, when the night is heavy as granite and darker than hell's pilot light, Lindy is sure she can hear Alice's screams.

"You should do something," Lindy has said to Cal. "You could say something to Al Redmond."

"I've never heard her complain," Cal always replies. "The day Alice comes to my door and asks me for help, I'll do something. I'm not busting into a neighbor's house without good reason."

Good reason, Lindy thinks, must be objective. She knows what she's heard; the screams, the gossip. But Cal's right when he says Alice never asks for help. But there's something in her eyes, Lindy has seen it. A fear, a dullness. An inability to speak anything but simple words of greeting.

"What are you dreaming about?" April leans across the counter and touches Lindy's shoulder. "You were a thousand miles away."

"I was thinking about Alice Redmond."

April's smile fades. "Her husband was in here earlier. I shut him off after his second drink."

It's the accident, Lindy's accident, that has taken the toll on April's bar. No one leaves April's tanked up and raring anymore. Not that they did in the time before the accident, but April was less likely to refuse customers then. Since Lindy nearly left her life's blood on the highway in front of April's door, the bar receipts have hit bottom. The carpet hasn't been renewed as planned, nor have the stool covers. April planned a billiard table and a new stereo system, but they, too, have been put on hold.

"Do you think she'll ever leave him?" Lindy asks.

April leans on the bar and shakes her golden head. "Only in a body bag."

It always comes back to Lindy when she pulls out of the bar's parking lot. It gives her a shivery feeling, as if she's the driver who hit her, sitting in his car, getting his beer-fuzzed perspective on the road ahead. It was afternoon when he hit her, broad daylight. He didn't look before he gunned the motor and sped across the lane divider, caught the front fender of Lindy's car. Hit it so hard it spun twice before smashing into the cement-fixed road sign on the opposite side. In a fraction of a second, Lindy was through the windscreen and crushed between cement and metal.

The first face Lindy recognized, later, was Cal's. He was standing over her hospital bed, his perfect face composed, reassuring.

"I love you," Cal said. "I'll get you home soon, even if I have to carry you in my arms."

What he was referring to, of course, was the serious damage to Lindy's right hip and thigh, her cracked pelvis. Bones shattered as if made from porcelain. Possible amputation.

"I'll walk home," Lindy replied to her husband of half a month.

When Lindy gets back from April's, Cal is gone and the house is dark and cold. The snow of the night before is back with a vengeance, falling in great feather sheets beyond the kitchen window. The electricity has gone off and there's no note to indicate Cal's time of departure or return. Lindy avoids the silent refrigerator and hunts out a can of soup for lunch.

She heats it over the fire Cal thoughtfully laid in the living room hearth before going out. As the smell of spicy chicken broth rises from the fireplace, Lindy heads upstairs to get an extra sweater and a blanket to put over her legs.

The telephone rings while Lindy is rummaging through the clothes chest.

"Thank God." It is Cal, breathless and laughing. "I was worried about you out in all that snow. You got home all right?"

Lindy bites back a bitter reply. "I made it back before the first flakes. But the electricity's off."

"I thought you might need the fire."

"Where are you?"

"Town," Cal says. "I came in to pick up the lining for the outside pipes. The store called just after you left, otherwise I'd have gone with you."

"Will you be home soon?"

"That's why I'm calling," Cal says, his voice suddenly serious. "The temperature's gone way below zero, and the snow's really piling up."

"Don't do anything stupid," Lindy says. "Don't risk the roads."

Cal takes a breath before replying. "I don't like the idea of you out there all alone."

"I'm fine," Lindy replies, her eyes wandering to the closet with the rifle hanging behind the door. "As long as the phone works I'm just fine."

Night falls and the house comes alive under the hand of the storm. Lindy wanders by candlelight, checking windows and doors, locks and safety bolts. When the wind really picks up, Lindy can feel the house shudder under its force. The rooftiles rattle, whistling sounds

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come from unseen corners where small holes must exist in casements or pine cladding. The fire alternately dies down or flares up, sizzles when the snow manages to find its way down the chimney.

Lindy worries about Cal. Knowing his concern for her outweighs his sense of self-preservation, Lindy imagines him driving through the icy drifts. She can see him stuck out on the main road, shivering in the cab of his pick-up truck, resigned to wait until the emergency services start clearing the road.

More wood is needed, so Lindy wraps herself in a blanket and heads out to the back porch. Snow comes at her horizontally, vertically, fired by the wind and laced with ice. It blinds her, stuffs up her nose and mouth. She reaches blindly for the pile of logs. As her numb fingers touch hardwood, the wind drops. She hears Cal's horse neigh once, twice. Plaintive and calling.

Feeding time. I forgot feeding time, Lindy groans to herself. He goes off to town, the storm hits, his horse starves to death. Lindy abandons the wood and steels herself for the walk to the barn.

The snow is knee-deep and piling up. Armed with a hurricane lantern and Cal's heavy overcoat, Lindy drags herself through the drifts. The snow is golden in the arc of the lantern, rising and falling like sand in an hour-glass. The barn ahead is a dark rectangle in all this whiteness, one-dimensional, grey rather than red. Lindy considers it a miracle when the side door swings open to her touch.

Cal's horse is standing against the far wall. Its eyes are wide and staring, a slick sheen of sweat glints off its neck and flanks.

"Easy," Lindy coos. "I'm here, boy." She wonders at the horse perspiring in the middle of an arctic fallout.

"Settle down," she calls. But when she opens the stall door to put in some hay, the horse starts forward, frightened.

Lindy steps back from the door and throws the hay down. She never did like horses, and especially not terrified ones. This one, at this moment, is exhibiting all the signs of an animal gone way beyond rational thought processes. I give him food, Lindy thinks, he tries to charge me.

Not taking any chances, Lindy foregoes the bucket of sweet feed and pellets, and just tips a couple of measures through the bars above the door. There's water in the far corner, so that's no problem. It's got a thin veneer of ice, but if the horse is thirsty enough he'll break through it.

Satisfied that she's done her duty, Lindy tugs Cal's coat tighter around her shoulders and heads for the door. But as she's turning, she catches the direction of the horse's stare. His eyes are locked on something over by the tack room.

Lindy holds her breath. Sudden fear makes her senses sharpen up. The hairs on the back of her neck stir. She can suddenly hear something more than the wind and the snow and the pounding of her own heart. It is breathing, and it is not in rhythm with the racing rise and fall of the horse's sides.

"Who's there?" Lindy calls, and holds the lantern high. Golden light picks out the open tack room door, the gleam of a bit, a stirrup. Cal's trophies.

Lindy is almost at the door when the strange smell hits her. Something metallic, familiar. Her eyes are drawn to the floor and she sees a bloody footprint.

"I'm sorry to make a mess," a cracked voice calls from beneath an old horse blanket.

Alice Redmond stands naked and bleeding before Lindy's hearth, her torn and bloodied clothes heaped at her feet. She is immodest, uncaring, unflinching as Lindy tends to her cuts and bruises. The damage is apparent and dramatic. Finger marks down Alice's thin arms where large hands have held fast. Red weals on the insides of her thighs. Brilliant blue patches on her neck and shoulders. Scratch marks on her breasts. Her face is so swollen Lindy is thankful they met in semi-darkness. At least she had Alice's voice to recognize her by—there is nothing familiar in the bulging, blood-shot eyes, the split lips and chipped teeth, the torn ear. Even Alice's hair, long and mahogany dark, seems to have hanks missing.

"He started on me when the power went out," Alice finally says, her voice altered by the gaps in her teeth. Blood like lipstick coats her mouth. "After television, I suppose I'm his only distraction."

"I'd call it assault and battery," Lindy replies. "If not attempted murder."

Alice shivers despite the closeness of the fire. "He wouldn't kill me. The power won't stay off forever."

"You're not going back to him?"

Alice manages something between a smile and a grimace. "All I need is a cup of coffee. And a little time to think."

What she needs, Lindy thinks as she goes in search of some clothes for Alice, is urgent medical treatment. I can't stitch that lip. Or that ear. She's beaten and bleeding and may have some internal damage. She looks worse than I looked after they pulled the car off me.

"I think we should call the police," Lindy says.

Alice starts like a frightened hare. "Don't do that. Please don't do that."

Lindy looks from Alice to the telephone. "I think you need more help than I can give you. Doctors. Policemen."

Alice shakes her swollen head. "Not tonight. I need time to think." When Lindy starts to protest, Alice continues, "And not in this storm. I wouldn't want an accident on my conscience."

"We'll call in the morning?" Lindy asks.

"In the morning," Alice nods. "Everything looks different by daylight."

Past midnight and Alice is dressed in an old pair of jeans

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and a couple of sweaters. Her face is a mask of black and blue, her mouth ballooned and crusting over. Dark stains have started seeping through the denim on Alice's thighs.

"Tell me about you," Alice says calmly. "Tell me about a normal marriage."

"I don't know if we're normal," Lindy replies. And for a moment she thinks that maybe she's been wrong about her marriage all along.

"We've been married for three years," she continues. "I met Cal at a party and we went to the church six months later."

"How did you know?" Alice asks. "How did you know he was the right one?"

"I guess I didn't," Lindy replies, suddenly feeling uncomfortable. "Maybe I still don't know. We've been lucky so far."

"Lucky," Alice says, her voice a faint whisper. "I know about your accident. You've had a rough time."

Lindy shakes her head, self-conscious. "It's nothing."

"Your husband is a good man."

"He's the eternal optimist."

"It must get on your nerves."

Lindy feels herself getting far more touchy than the situation warrants. Here sits Alice Redmond, freshly battered, saying something critical about a man who's never raised a hand in anger. And yet how does she know his constant geniality can be annoying to Lindy? She's almost a stranger. And a battered stranger to boot.

"Yes," Lindy exhales. "Yes, it does get to me. I want him to expect more of me. He's so damned satisfied that I live and breathe. He would have been ecstatic if I'd never risen from my hospital bed. I want him to want more from me."

Alice tries another smile. "Sometimes it's nice to be able to fulfill someone else's expectations. Without trying too hard."

Early hours and Alice Redmond sleeps soundly in Cal and Lindy's bed. Lindy watched over her until she fell asleep. The night is far from its usual silent heaviness. The wind still lashes at the walls and windows, the snow still falls. But there's a calm within the house. Lindy breathes it in as she rocks in front of the fire. It may have something to do with something Alice said before she fell asleep. "If his expectations of you are too low, you'll just have to raise them yourself. Don't worry about surprising him. Show him your best, and make it clear you have much more to offer than he's ever dreamed. Maybe he'll surprise you, too. Maybe he'll get a mean streak in the middle of all this unexpected happiness."

Lindy thinks of this as she rocks in front of the flames. When Cal comes home she'll tell him her plans. The house is at the top of the list. Out go the family furnishings. All those ragged slip covers and old-fashioned wallpaper that have been around since his family claimed this land. And then there's April. She's been asking Lindy to work with her for three years now. Life would be more than planting pumpkins, coping with the steel pins and the pain. Or maybe a baby at last. The doctors said to wait until the complications of the injury had finally abated. The cracked pelvis, the pain killers. Making love to Cal without a contraceptive would be a whole new experience.

She could picture Cal's face. Make a baby? But I don't want to hurt you, honey. The strains of childbearing might just kill off Cal's complacency.

There's a hum. It's not the usual night-time hum. It buzzes down the chimney, swirls around the sparking logs. Lindy rises stiffly and limps across to the window that looks over the fields. A pair of headlights cut through the falling snow. It might be Cal, taking the back roads to avoid any highway collisions. But he would have tried earlier, wouldn't he? He would have called before setting out on something so dangerous.

Back roads, Lindy thinks. Alice walked three miles down the back road to get here. She said the snow had drifted off the dirt and pebble, and it wasn't too hard to follow right through to Lindy and Cal's place.

Alice rolls over as Lindy opens the closet door.

"Is it over yet?" Alice mumbles. As Lindy takes the rifle by the barrel she wonders if Alice means the beating or the storm.

Lindy is downstairs by the time the truck pulls up in the back yard. She shoulders the rifle and points it at the door. Should Alice's husband break the bolt, she'll shoot him. He's demonstrated his handiwork on his wife, so Lindy has no qualms about shooting first and asking questions later. Vice-versa reactions would, no doubt, lead to a marked inability to ask any questions whatsoever. Or to shoot.

He's left the engine running and that, coupled with the sharp rise of the wind, makes it impossible for Lindy to hear what he shouts as he pounds on the back door.

"Go away," Lindy hollers, adrenaline making her heart ache.

The door knob starts rattling. The door groans on its hinges.

"Stop or I'll shoot," Lindy yells.

Her finger jerks back, catching the trigger. The rifle bucks against Lindy's shoulder, tears an enormous hole in the back door. A man is thrown backwards, his shout now a scream. Lindy is running for the telephone, has to make the call. She will need to summon an ambulance, a sheriff, start the process which will finally end whatever began in a house some three miles away on the lake's edge.

But when she picks up the receiver there is no familiar tone. Just a distant hiss, like a message from the North, like the snow that blows in through the hole in the back door and pools, white and sterile, on the polished floor at Lindy's feet. □

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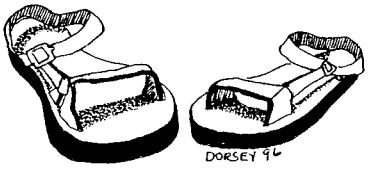
Using Space

ROBERT L. KING

THE WOMAN SELLING programs at London's National Theatre remarked to the man ahead of me, "The Americans are coming on the Concorde to see it." He was hoping for a single ticket to Wallace Shawn's new play, *The Designated Mourner*, but all performances were sold out and returns were scarce. Before it opened, *The New Yorker* ran an appreciation of the play and its author, comparing his achievement to *A Modest Proposal* and adding enticing comments from one of its stars, Mike Nichols. Miranda Richardson joined him and David de Keyser in the cast of three; playwright David Hare directed. It promised to be an Event.

The cast faced front from its seats behind a trestle table. Some planks were leveled on the horses by books, which, along with pitchers of water and trappings of the study, covered much of the table's surface. The books are Howard's; his daughter, Judy, is married to Jack, the title character. Nichols opened the play: "The designated mourner. I am the designated mourner." He put his hand to his chest, not so much to identify his role clearly as to convey surprise that he would fill it. From this opening gesture on, Nichols struck the social pose of someone who has thoroughly rehearsed his lines in an effort to make them seem convincingly unrehearsed. As a result, the audience was simultaneously put off and drawn in by the skill of his understated acting. We needed Jack; he supplied much of the play's information about Howard's imprisonment and assassination, a heavy price for writing politically controversial essays in an unidentified country. Yet, we couldn't fully trust Jack, an outsider in Howard's and Judy's world of letters, a confidant who uses distancing irony for self-preservation. Shawn's rhetorical strategy could hardly be more subtle; the audience must judge but can't locate the play's values with any confidence.



Jack, insensitive to the literature he once studied, is the vehicle for the play's attack on liberal pretense. Of Howard, he asks us:

> How should I begin to tell you about this complex man who responded so sensitively to the most obscure verses and also to the cries of the miserable and the downtrodden, sometimes virtually at the same instant, without ever leaving his breakfast table?

Later, he involves us in his critique of thinking that leads from easy sympathy for the poor and wretched to fear of what they'll do if social reforms empower them: "I mean, are you with me here? Am I going too fast?" Throughout, Jack's moral compass points only to facts and the self. Scornful of his father-in-law's writing, he is himself all talk even as he criticizes his wife and, unwittingly, *The Designated Mourner* itself: "Spare me all the talk, Judy. I'm not interested in talk." Indeed, Judy plays solitaire early in his speechifying. The audience's interest also wanes. It begins with a willingness to love the performances and to laugh at Jack's prompting, but by the end, the static staging and Jack's long speeches, mostly direct address to the house, make for weariness. For all the subtlety of Shawn's approach, his play is more a lecture on contemporary malaise than a performance piece.

THE MOST VERSATILE of the National's three houses, the Cottesloe, presented *The Designated Mourner* on a raised stage, with the audience at a didactic distance. In the same place, the audience, like the subject's work in progress, occupied three sides of the playing space for a new play on the life of Stanley Spencer. It takes nothing away from Pam Gems as playwright to say that Anthony Sher's performance made Stanley a success by realizing the complexity of the central character. Before the play opens, Sher, a painter himself with exhibits to his credit, was at work on a mural partially obscured by scaffolding above the far wall. In the first scene, he is painting his wife, Hilda, and Sher with a winning enthusiasm articulates his calling "to reveal the nature of the world." Like Shawn's Jack, Spencer is attracted to the things of this world, but unlike him, he sees them as the necessary ground for a larger personal vision. He shows Hilda an unfinished picture of Christ: "His body flung onto the grass, He's holding the grass in rapture." Soon he "falters" and "begins to shake gently." The creative enthusiast is emotionally vulnerable and needs a consoling embrace from his wife. She asks, "What was it like?" and he haltingly talks about the wounded he saw in the war, the victims he will make whole again in his art.

Although Stanley depends on Hilda, he divorces her for the manipulative, selfish Patricia Preece who did in fact promote her lesbian partner's paintings as her own. Patricia spends Stanley's money lav-

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(signature) Robley Wilson, Editor

ishly, takes over title to his house and charges Hilda for using it. While Stanley is self-absorbed, Patricia is merely selfish. He insists to Hilda that he "in the middle of your attention," asks about their children only as an afterthought and, having left her, shamelessly insists on her emotional support: "You can't just abandon me." Patricia schemes to get the "things" she craves; Stanley simply assumes that as an artist, he can make his own rules: "Why can't I have two wives if that's what I need?" He wants his personal vision to have spiritual permanence so that he can create "A cathedral of me!"

Patricia's lover, Dorothy Hepworth, confirms this view near the end of the play. Stanley has been knighted; a reporter wants a comment, and the eminently sane Dorothy speaks, I think, of Stanley's appeal for Pam Gems: "He paints people trapped, as it were, in their own flesh, pinned down to this earth, and yet they seek to soar and he makes that seem so very possible." In a concluding soliloquy, a serene Stanley speaks to his dead wife as he paints: "You know what I think, Hilda? I think an artist is the mediator between God and man. He could even be next in divinity to the saint."

Earlier, in a low voice full of conviction, Hilda told Stanley that she would not return to him while Patricia lived nearby: "I will not breathe the air she breathes, touch what she has touched. I will not inhabit any space that she has lived in." But, dramatically, she has. Gems and her director, John Caird, put the two women together in the same space, sometimes while Stanley was ignoring Hilda to pursue Patricia. The wife remained literally in the background while Patricia toyed with Stanley in the foreground. Both women are constant presences in his life even when absent from his sight. The intelligent use of space gently enforced that point about Stanley, that he needed and truly wanted Hilda even as he betrayed her. That paradox at the heart of his character parallels his earthy spirituality and, projected by the variety of Sher's portrayal, made him not only credible but sympathetic.

FOR DAVID LAN'S *The Ends of the Earth* in the same theater, some seats were removed to make a mountain at one of the playing space. Two other areas, covered with sand for the most part, accommodated several settings from village square to bedroom to makeshift prison. In an unintended irony, the discordant elements of the set came to represent the play's attempt to compress too much in too limited a frame. As his title implies, Lan tackles large themes on the scale they deserve. His *Flight* followed two generations of Jews from Lithuania to Rhodesia; his adaptation of Sobol's *Ghetto* more directly dramatized attempts at humane survival as the Holocaust widened its web of death. Lan had set *The Ends of the Earth* in London and the Balkans well before the shooting war began. He makes no attempt to exploit the play's unanticipated currency; on the contrary, the turns of his narrative are technical conveniences rather than social or political revelations. Perhaps that's why the theater, sold out for the Shawn and Gems plays, was half empty for a more timely drama directed by Andrei Serban.

Daniel, a geologist, is somewhere in the Balkans to select the site for a dam, a project that will set Valley and Mountain people against each other in a war. His wife, Cathy, has joined him there; they sit across from each other in a café, and as the owner gives a humorous account of a local Easter ritual, they have simultaneous orgasms, Cathy being stimulated under the table by his foot. They are together and apart, married and divided. Daniel berates Cathy for leaving their daughter in London; the young girl has a congenital heart defect and needs yet more surgery. To resolve his complicated mix of family, sex and politics, Lan plays a tough variation on a mythic commonplace. Following the advice of his host and Takic, his guide, Daniel seeks out

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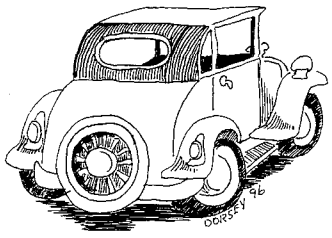
an "old man who lives high in the mountains." Such a repository of wisdom might lead Daniel's dam project, his damaged marriage and diseased daughter to wholeness, but there is no old man except for Takic's knife. Daniel is robbed, stripped almost naked and abandoned. When he does get advice from an old man, a regular at the café, it is to give up smoking. Daniel imagines a causal connection between quitting and saving his daughter's life, and during the shooting war, is threatened with death unless he smokes and, in his captor's words, lets his daughter die. He smokes, Takic is brought in bloodied and bound, then executed. The last scene displays a measure of harmony restored to the mountain, and Daniel, leaving his cigarettes behind, departs as Takic's daughter plays with an older woman. Smoking, of course, is literal death. It is at once too slight and too weighty to serve as a metaphor or narrative device in a play that aims for geopolitical significance.

BRITISH FRIENDS WHO SAW *Blue Remembered Hills* in its television premiere could not imagine it on stage. Having seen it in the theater, I can't imagine it anywhere else. Dennis Potter, best known here for *The Singing Detective* on PBS, wrote the play for a 1979 BBC production that the London *Times* called "a landmark television drama." All seven parts are for seven-year-old children; they play through one afternoon during the war when thousands of them were sent to the countryside to avoid German bombs targeted at cities. The children kill a squirrel, bully a boy who stutters, imitate their parents' talk and scare each other with racist war stories. What makes the insights of *Blue Remembered Hills* both cutting and dramatic stems from Potter's insistence that the children be played by adults. He did not want fears "or any other emotions to be distanced by the presence of young limbs, fresh eyes, and falsetto voices." The adult actors, to be sure, have their own distinctive presences on stage; their gestures and delivery, never condescending to the role or patronizing to the child within, do distance us intellectually from the action. We see the child's behavior and at the same time see through it to the maturity of our vicious age.

In the National Theatre production, comically artificial staging worked to similar effect. A panel opened on one side of the stage to release a model Spitfire which "flew" across on a wire to a panel which opened to receive it at just the right moment. The toy squirrel "ran" in both directions, but as a wired prop, could not turn around and retraced its path tail first to our amusement. The one cow stayed statue-rigid when it was tipped over to disclose a hiding place for the children. We are amused, nearly titillated by such clever strokes and, so, might miss the dark hints that Potter drops early on. The boy with the stutter, mockingly called Donald Duck by the others, has been abused. In their unthinking parodies of their society's values, the children are metaphorically playing with destructive forces, and when Donald Duck literally plays with fire, the others —still taunting him—shut him up in a burning barn and, with thoughtless deliberation, cause his death. Unlike the stylized props and the barn it consumes, the flames themselves are stunningly real. Fire, like nudity and spitting, is one stage action that cannot be faked and still be convincing. It shrinks the distance between the artifice of theater and our feelings. Potter gets the emotional immediacy he intended with an additional intensity that only living theater can produce.



THE COVER BLURB for the text of *The Designated Mourner* calls the play "harsh and poetic," yet poet Tony Harrison is credited with a "verse drama" for his rewriting of Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse* in English couplets. In some current usage, "poetic" is a cover term for any writing that juxtaposes opposites even if they leave us with no more than inconsequential ambiguities. You won't get the point, but don't dare say so. Harrison, on the contrary, wants the poetry of his play to score—to make points and to carve rough lines to guide deeper cutting. *The Prince's Play* was mounted in the Olivier theater, the largest of the National houses. The provenance of its scale is grand and literally operatic; Hugo's play, banned after one performance for its political implications, supplied the plot for *Rigoletto*. Richardson simultaneously expands and reduces the familiar story. The prince of the title is the Prince of Wales, philandering heir to Victoria's throne, and Scotty Scot is jester to his sycophantic circle. Despite the nineteenth-century characters and setting, Richardson speaks to his own time from the very opening when Scotty, dressed as a woman, dances in clogs as the Prince and entourage watch in a music hall. At the dance's climax, Scotty lifts his dress for the theater audience and reveals a bold "HRH" on his underpants as the Prince in his partial seeing applauds the performance. We are in on the lowering joke, he is not, and our HRH, Prince Charles, is only a tabloid away.

Once the association is made, many of the play's lines enclose the present prince in their rocking rhythms. One Lord says:

> Those I feel sorry for, the men I pity
> have daughters, wives and sisters in this city
> to fall ready victims to the roving eye
> of the future king they'll be dishonored by.

Another concludes a long speech with "the roué prince pollutes his Royal name!" Scotty occupies a middle ground at first; he fills the traditional role of court satirist: "I scourge the mighty with my comic act." He is the privileged Fool, protected by his patron prince, but in attacking

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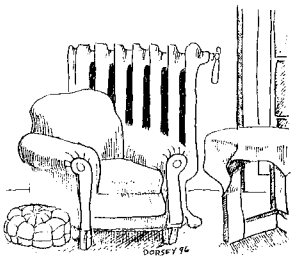
nobility, he makes powerful enemies. Scotty thinks that he will repay each "slighting sneer" and that he can drop the mask of "cruel satirist" to be the "warm" father who protects his sheltered daughter. He learns to his tragic pain that the two roles cannot be kept distinct, for the nobles take revenge on Scotty by turning his daughter, whom they think is his mistress, over to the prince's lust. As she is being raped, all Scotty can do is lash out with words, and his plot to take ultimate revenge redounds against him.

Harrison's couplets can have the pointed balance of his satiric forebears; they illuminate differences by bringing disparate elements together: "It's the Ladies, the Ladies that light up a party,/ your Highness, the Ladies, not limp literati!" Often, the sounds that confirm the verses' authority deaden our ears to meaning that a reading discovers. In one instance, Scotty characterizes himself in lines with punchy alliteration and an offbeat, functional rhyme: "I, prostituted to the Peerage, to purvey/ everything that's ribald and risqué." Here, the unacknowledged parallel that the appositive makes between Scotty and his daughter may have its full force only in the study. As Scotty, Ken Stott dominated the physical and emotional action of the play. The rest of the cast, with far less to do, was on the same high level. Even in such a company, the seasoned and versatile Michael Bryant stood almost alone in his ability to make Harrison's couplets sound like poetry and natural speech at the same time.



WHO SHALL BE HAPPY . . . ? takes place in April, 1794 in Paris at "the height of the Great Terror." A guard, Henry, watches over The Prisoner on the eve of his execution. He may be Danton or a standin for him put there to confound any rescue attempt. In a brief program note, author Trevor Griffiths writes of what his play is "about." That is, his work means something; his audiences are expected to think about society and its structures. At the Bush, one of London's best fringe theaters, The Prisoner lay on a bed in a cage as the audience entered. The theater is small enough to begin with, with no one more than a dozen feet from the action, so the cage intensified a sense of confinement and its proximity directly involved the audience. Henry could give his prisoner movement outside the cage but only for the length of a chain on his ankle. When The Prisoner spit out part of a long draught from a bottle, I, for one, caught part of the spray.

In such a theater, little—sometimes not even lighting—separates the audience from the action. When The Prisoner says that he sees "little white faces in the dark," and that they are the future, his physical intimacy with the audience lends the overt meaning a measure of credibility it would not have coming from across footlights. Distributing responsibility for the revolution's betrayal of equality, The Prisoner plays at being Robespierre and Marat as well as Danton:

> HENRY: You could be anyone.
> THE PRISONER: That's what actors do, Henry, be anyone.

With the guillotine waiting for him, The Prisoner ingratiates himself with Henry to persuade him to smuggle out a letter. He expresses sympathy for the guard—his class does the fighting and dying and, so, deserves a better world. But Henry is accomplished at playing his role too. Claiming that he wants to guarantee the letter's delivery, he takes the prisoner's money, watch and ring to bribe non-existent guards. At the end, he has kept everything for himself, and lights his pipe with the burning letter. No sentimentalist for social reform, Griffiths creates a lower-class guard driven by self interest, and he leaves us with him enjoying a casual smoke as his prisoner goes to his death. Just before his exit, The Prisoner asks "Who shall be happy if not . . . ?" On about the seventh time, he finishes the question with "everybody." Who indeed? The play rather clearly sees its audience benefitting from the capitalism and exploitation that followed the revolution, yet The Prisoner also tells us, "You too cannot live without hope." The posterboard message rang with its own tough truth coming from a Belfast theater company, The Mad Cow. Before being taken on tour, the play had its world premiere in a place where "hope" and "everybody" have meanings that no outsider's critique can appreciate.

THE TRICYCLE THEATRE, noted for producing black and Irish dramas, commissioned three one-act "responses" to a two-hour distillation of the Nuremberg war crimes trial. Although the plays did not fulfill the brilliance of their informing concept, no other theater that I know of has so honestly challenged our collective conscience. How can we watch genocide on the news after Hitler? What did the victors promise at Nuremberg? Pictures in the theater program of mass graves at Belsen and in Zaire look disturbingly interchangeable, as if we learned nothing in half a century. When we hear the Nuremberg assurances, we have graphic evidence of their betrayal:

> This trial must be a milestone in the history of the world . . . in the determination that these things shall not occur again.
>
> and
>
> This trial must contribute to prohibiting such degenerate wars in the future. (Albert Speer!)

As Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic stay at large, we hear in an opening statement from the trial that "crimes are always committed by people" and not by states. The clinically cool testimony of Rudolf Hoess, Commandment of Auschwitz, rests on the premise that "human life has absolutely no value." The actors impersonated the historical figures in a set that

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reconstructed the courtroom accurately. In keeping with the somber tone, they did not take curtain calls. The audience shifted in their places, then shuffled out, the better to reflect on the disquieting lesson.

After a half-hour break, a prologue introduced the shorter plays; we heard the Hague prosecutor of Bosnian war crimes call Nuremberg "one of the few beacons to shine out of the twentieth century." *Reel, Rwanda* by Femi Osofisan devoted too much of its forty minutes to factual exposition of Dutch colonial excesses, a subject better suited for the courtroom or lecture hall. In *Ex-Yu*, Goran Stefanovski spoke through a cynical character to challenge the London audience: "I went," he says in a restaurant somewhere in Yugoslavia, "to theaters where they put on plays about *our* problems." He accuses liberals in London of behavior like Shawn's Howard: eating, smoking and drinking as they moralize about the troubles in his country. He asks, "Is multi-culturalism possible in the Balkans?" Stefanovski sees the lessons of Nuremberg lost in fashionable talk; he raised some uneasy laughter.

Keith Reddin's *Haiti* was set in a Miami beach hotel where an Army officer is challenged by his wife for intervening against his orders in an attempt to save lives on the island. Reddin brings the actual event home at the end of the play in a strong, understated comment on our hypocrisy and moral posturing. Principles are fine things but don't ask us to live by them:

> BOB: Someone had to go in there, to that prison.
>
> KELLY: Yeah, I'm sorry it was you.

Tricycle deserves thanks and admiration for mounting potent reminders of the Nuremberg legacy that we have chosen to ignore.

ANNA DEAVERE SMITH's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* is formally identical to her *Fires in the Mirror*; both are segments of her long-range project, *On the Road: A Search for the American Character*. She creates monologues from taped interviews and acts them out in the character of the speaker. Alone in the arena of the Long Wharf Theatre, Smith represented multiple voices reacting to the Rodney King and Reginald Denny beatings and to the riots that followed the Simi Valley verdicts. More than that, much more, she projects the values of the character behind the voice and through her dramatic art directs us to see their relative worth. In one section, subtitled "A Conversation About Race That Never Happened," she brings together six people who "have not been in a room together." The scene tells us, I think, something fundamental about her achievement in theater, both as the acting place where her characters perforce occupy the same space and as the place where an audience gathers to see something. The six need to come together, Senator Bradley and a former Black Panther for example, if we will begin to understand where we are. Smith offers no pat answers to the present state of things in a country where the races are together and not together at the same time, but she does suggest that everybody needs to be heard without one person dominating others.

All her other portrayals take place in the same stage "room." When she plays a police officer defending "upper-body-control" as he demonstrates for the court how to use his baton, the matter-of-fact tone is chilling enough in itself, but coming out of a stage space common to all her witnesses, it informs and is informed by the testimonies of King's aunt, of a member of the Los Angeles Police Commission and all the others. The performance of each character, thanks to her acting, is strikingly singular; the final effect is collective and overwhelming. Smith's openness to all points of view further enhances the moral authority of her play. Tapes of beatings, like photographs of genocide, are certain to shock but may provoke only a sensational response. Her theater, juxtaposing and interconnecting a small world of characters, goes beyond the merely factual to show us the stains on our national soul.

IN RECENT YEARS, Arthur Miller has enjoyed greater success in England than in his homeland. *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* opened in London in 1991 but had its American premiere only this summer at the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Miller, as he has before, worked in Williamstown on the production, a typically high-level one for the Festival with a cast headed by F. Murray Abraham and Michael Learned. The play's central character, Lyman Felt, lies in a cast in a hospital bed at the start; he speaks to us with his eyes shut:

> Please be seated. We have a lot of material . . . not material . . . yes, material . . . to cover this afternoon, so please take your seats . . . you can cross your legs.

It's an invitation to be cozy, to enjoy, and the full-house in the Berkshires did just that. Lyman has sent his car down an icy road on Mount Morgan, maybe on purpose: "My God, what have I done? How could I have gone down that road in a storm?" What he has done is supply Miller a starting point; Lyman, we soon see, has two wives, and they meet for the first time in the waiting room of the hospital. His father appears in dream scenes, much as Uncle Ben does in *Death of a Salesman*, but here for comic effect. As in the earlier play, scenes are intercut with flashbacks; Miller's technique often shows more than it tells. When he does tell, however, the playwright can be heavy-handed. The jokes in *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* have the sudden flare and quick passing of one-liners, and the generalities are signaled: "It's funny; my generation got married to show its maturity, yours stays single for the same reason." All in all, the contrived premise is too frail for the profundities that are laid upon it, and the tragic-comic swings of emotion come from the actors' talents rather than complex characters. A Miller play must, nonetheless, be seen, and Williamstown with its long tradition of turning summers into professional seasons once again showed others the way. □

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Dancing in Saint Paul

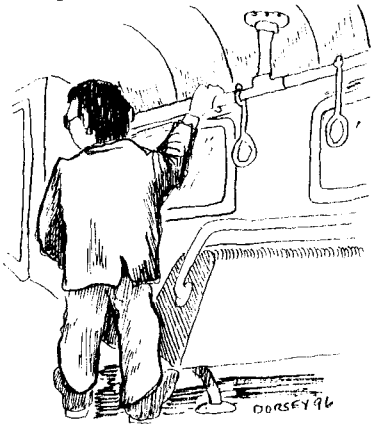
LEO J. HERTZEL

DURING THE THIRD WEEK of September, I traveled to Saint Paul where a group of citizens were holding a public celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Many of the events took place in and around Rice Park in the center of the city. Rice Park is a square block of trees and a little pool, surrounded on four sides by important buildings: The Saint Paul Hotel, the Saint Paul Public Library, the Ordway Theater, the huge stone Landmark Cultural Center, which once was the Federal Courts Building. Branches of the trees in Rice Park are strung with lights, and people in Saint Paul say during winter evenings the glow of the lights through the snow makes the park a fairyland.

Standing on a platform in the center of the park, sculptor Michael B. Price talked to a gathering crowd about his statue of F. Scott Fitzgerald, waiting to be unveiled a short distance away. "I wanted to wed him to this site, but not in a way that was anecdotal like showing him hailing a cab, or symbolic like standing for all great literature. I made a sculpture of F. Scott Fitzgerald as I thought he might look, standing under a lamppost in Rice Park in close proximity to the things he loved—culture, literature, great restaurants."

When Price finished speaking, Garrison Keillor, who was waiting behind, called, "Let's get some writers over here, up front." He arranged a loose procession—visiting writers and special guests first: Tobias Wolff, Jane Smiley, Bobbie Ann Mason, Joseph Heller; Scott Fitzgerald's granddaughter Eleanor Lanahan; Fitzgerald's secretary from his Hollywood days, Frances Kroll Ring. After them came Price; the mayor of Saint Paul, Norm Coleman; several hundred high school students left over from a morning Fitzgerald-celebration field trip; bearded young men in sweaters who must have been graduate students in the humanities; passing citizens attracted by the action; curious visitors from the hotel. I joined in toward the back of the column. We shambled toward the corner near the little pool, across from the Landmark Center. There, Keillor waved us into a wide circle around a shrouded form waiting at sidewalk level.

The visiting writers, special guests, Price, and Keillor crowded around. Someone tugged on the parachute shroud and in the chill late afternoon shadows, the bronze likeness of F. Scott Fitzgerald appeared, his head turned slightly toward the library across the park. A handsome figure dressed in a three-piece suit, he held an overcoat



and hat. He's about Price's height, but Keillor and Jane Smiley tower over him. Fitzgerald's lips are pressed together in a wry half-smile, an anxious self-conscious grin as though he is embarrassed by all of the attention. He may be getting ready to leave the park.

A bronze marker bolted to a little wall beside the statue now reads:

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD
b. Saint Paul Sept. 24, 1896
d. Hollywood Dec. 21, 1940

This bronze sculpture by Michael B. Price is presented to the people of Saint Paul by The Saint Paul Foundation, in honor of a young man who became a writer in this city.

"So we beat on, boats against the current borne back ceaselessly into the past."

F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Great Gatsby

The unveiling of the statue was one of several climaxes during the week.

THE CELEBRATION BEGAN four days earlier with a party when more than five hundred citizens gathered in the great hall of the Landmark Center. They ate pieces of cake cut by the mayor, lighted birthday candles, sang *Happy Birthday, Scott Fitzgerald*. The Jazz Ensemble from Fitzgerald's old Saint Paul school played. Above the crowd, the bland and strangely vacant face of Scott Fitzgerald stared down from within the borders of a huge enlargement of the bright red Fitzgerald commemorative stamp that would be formally issued later in the week.

According to a story in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Keillor told the crowd, "We honor Scott Fitzgerald because he is one of us and we are proud of him. This is his homecoming to Saint Paul.... We don't honor him to promote his reputation. His reputation depends on his writing, and his writing is doing very well. To recognize Fitzgerald is to recognize all writers, authors, artists, a Saint Paul that offers opportunity for each person to live a rich inner life, dream dreams, tell our stories, think deeper thoughts."

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After that party, the celebration became a series of planned events that dealt with subjects like Saint Paul life in the 1920s or Fitzgerald's life in Saint Paul or Fitzgerald's work. The activities were mostly informal gatherings and everyone was expected to have a good time.

Page Cowles, an owner of Hungry Mind Press, who was chair of the committee that gathered funds for all of this activity, said the celebration cost a little more than $400,000. "All of the money was raised from donations," she said. "Most of it came from foundations ....Garrison Keillor was the driving force behind it all. He wrote letters to a number of people in the community, saying he had an idea for a community-wide celebration of literature and writing. He wanted to bring young people in. He wanted it to be as accessible to the public as possible."

I MADE A LIST OF SOME of the things a person could do as part of the celebration that week:

- Eat free popcorn while watching Mia Farrow and Robert Redford in the 1949 film version of *The Great Gatsby*;
- See *The Women*, a 1939 film Fitzgerald may have written at least part of the script for while he worked in Hollywood;
- Take one or more lessons in the Charleston or the Black Bottom or the Grizzly Bear;
- Sit in an auditorium with 2,500 high school students and listen to famous writers talk about writing;
- Attend lectures and discussions on literature, or Fitzgerald's life, or the present state of American culture, given by the famous writers individually or in pairs;
- Watch a 1920s-style show—according to the brochure, "The flapper's clothes matched her character and her newfound freedom of movement."
- Attend a formal ceremony including a color guard and post office dignitaries marking the first-day issue of the F. Scott Fitzgerald commemorative stamp;
- Listen to people from the literary and artistic communities read aloud all of *Tender Is the Night*, "Babylon Revisited," "The Ice Palace," *The Great Gatsby*, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," and more than a dozen other Fitzgerald stories;
- Browse in displays of books by and about Fitzgerald—"Fitzgerald Bookstore, by Hungry Mind, Saint Paul, features nearly 100 titles of works by Fitzgerald and local and national authors," read the advertisement in the brochure;
- Watch skits and dances with themes from the 1920s;
- Ride a trolley bus that wound "through streets in the neighborhoods of Saint Paul where Fitzgerald was born, lived and wrote."
- Drink a cup of coffee in a coffeehouse tent erected in front of the Fitzgerald Theater;
- Attend a special *Prairie Home Companion* Fitzgerald radio broadcast;
- Watch the dedication of the statue in Rice Park;
- Attend a ball.

Most of these events were free. Someone who wanted to spend a few dollars could buy a Fitzgerald t-shirt or Fitzgerald balloons or a book bag, coffee mug, or a little black-and-white Fitzgerald bookmark. A golden souvenir program sold for $4.95.

Kelvin W. Miller, a musician and owner of an art gallery as well as a public relations business, told me one afternoon he saw the entire Fitzgerald celebration as a way of encouraging American people to be a little more appreciative of the arts. "I'm envious of the French," he said, "because they have taken scientists and artists and given them popular status. We don't have that with our kind of popular culture where rock stars and athletes get all the attention."

The reading of "One Trip Abroad" didn't get enough attention that night to threaten attendance at Timberwolf games. But the reading left a memory of affection and respect.

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NOT EVERYONE who attended was an English major.

I was eating lunch alone at a table in one corner of the Landmark Center one afternoon when a heavily muscled man with a shaved head sat down across from me. He was carrying a piece of cake on a plate.

"What's the F stand for?" He nodded at the huge Fitzgerald face staring down at us from within the stamp.

I said, "Francis."

"Why do they do all this stuff?" He looked up at the stamp again, then down toward two display dummies dressed in 1920s-style clothes. "Do they make money this way?"

I said I didn't think they made much money this way.

"Well, I guess there's nothing wrong with making money, is there?"

I agreed with that.

None of the people I talked to that week knew of another American city that had ever celebrated a writer's birthday with so much enthusiasm—with so much money, affection, and commercial hype. "We did it all from scratch," a woman who worked with one of the planning committees told me. "We made it up as we went along."

One afternoon I talked with Jim Heynen about the readings scheduled during the week. Heynen, a novelist who teaches at St. Olaf college, was one of the readers. He liked the way we were celebrating Fitzgerald, "a purely joyful event that satisfies our hunger to celebrate," he said. "It legitimizes writing, draws attention to literature as more than just words on a page." He thought English teachers everywhere ought to learn from Saint Paul.

THE ENTHUSIASM WAS especially unusual because Scott Fitzgerald was not very fond of Saint Paul.

He was born on the verge of wealth in this capitol city and left to go east to Princeton when he was 19. He returned to Saint Paul only occasionally—once to complete *This Side of Paradise*, once with Zelda for the birth of their child. When he became sufficiently successful as a writer, he chose to live in New York, Paris, Zurich, eventually Hollywood, but he did not return to Saint Paul. He died in Hollywood in 1940 and is buried along with Zelda in Rockville, Maryland.

Fitzgerald wrote very little about life in Saint Paul or life in Minnesota. When he did use a local setting in a story—"The Ice Palace" is an example—he was most often critical of the lives people have here.

Thus, the Fitzgerald celebration drew a few unfavorable words from the community.

"Just how should we feel about the man who left Minnesota in 1922, never to return?" asked a *Pioneer Press* editorial carefully the day the statue was dedicated. The editorial concluded that the celebration was acceptable. But by asking the question, the newspaper acknowledged that not everyone thought it was appropriate.

I talked to a man who said he was a musician and had come to one of the birthday events to listen to the music. He did not approve of Saint Paul celebrating Scott Fitzgerald. "I think it's ironic that Fitzgerald turned his back on Saint Paul," he said, "but now Saint Paul won't turn its back on Fitzgerald."

There was criticism from citizens who had heard of Scott and Zelda's shameful conduct when they visited the city many years ago. There were stories of drunken parties and property damage. Why should the city hold up such people for honor?

There was criticism from academics who knew about literature. "I find it ironic that this guy Fitzgerald high-tailed it out of here and trashed it and went off to New York and Paris and now they're claiming him to celebrate great Saint Paul," Paula Rabinowitz of the University of Minnesota English Department told me when I asked her how she felt about the celebration. She had said the same things to others who had asked her opinion, including at least one newspaper reporter who put the words in print.

Garrison Keillor, in a piece that appeared in *The New York Times Book Review* the day before the Saint Paul mayor cut the cake, answered all objections. He agreed that Fitzgerald was not "overly fond" of Minnesota. He agreed that Fitzgerald preferred life in New York. He agreed that Fitzgerald did not enjoy the Minnesota cold and wasn't interested in the Minnesota woods or the prairie. He agreed that Fitzgerald never wrote a line of homage to his home. Keillor concluded, "Somehow, it doesn't matter. He is admired in Saint Paul, anyway. . . . "

F. Scott Fitzgerald's 100th Birthday
A Literature Festival
1896 • 1996

KEILLOR IS A PERSUASIVE man. For the past several years in Saint Paul, he has been promoting Fitzgerald and his work—renaming as "The Fitzgerald" the theater in which radio broadcasts of *A Prairie Home Companion* originate, sponsoring public readings of *The Great Gatsby* from that theater on the 98th and 99th anniversaries of Fitzgerald's birth. With Keillor's support and that of his friends, the celebration flourished.

Except for the unveiling of the statue in Rice Park, the most impressive events of the week were the public readings. The reading of an entire novel aloud in a public place is surely high homage to a writer. The presence of listeners who come to hear the words is an

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expression of great respect. During the Fitzgerald celebration week, public readings of his prose took place twice a day every day. The words were like a continuous background curtain of sound for all of the other activities. One the final day, the reading of *The Great Gatsby* in "The Fitzgerald" theater continued from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon.

Not every reading drew a crowd, but there were at least 20 listeners at every reading I attended. The reading of *The Great Gatsby* on the final day drew a total of nearly 3,000.

One evening, I walked up to the third floor of the Landmark Center where in an old high-ceilinged courtroom with ornate wood paneling and narrow windows framed in worked wood, a gray-bearded poet named Louis Jenkins and writer Christine Sweet were taking turns reading aloud Fitzgerald's spooky "One Trip Abroad." Two dozen listeners were scattered among the pew-like seats.

The sound amplification system was defective. Even someone who knew the story would have difficulty following it here. But everyone sat intent and some of the listeners smiled knowingly at the right places and frowned a little when the story turned gloomy. They already knew the story. They had come here not to find out what happened in a new piece of fiction, but to hear it again and enjoy it through someone else's voice.

When Jenkins and Sweet finished and moved down from the reader's platform, Marisha Chamberlain from the English Department at the university came up from the back of the room and began checking her script for "Crazy Sunday," the story she and Peter Moore would read together. More listeners arrived.

Down the hall in another old courtroom, another team was reading from Book III of *Tender Is the Night*.

The low hum of reading voices drifted along the corridor.

WE ARE TEMPTED to think of Scott Fitzgerald as a man who wasted his life and his talent with too much alcohol and dissipation, but how then explain the existence of so many careful words from a life of 44 years?

Kelvin W. Miller told me one afternoon he saw the celebration as a way of encouraging people to be a little more appreciative of the arts. "I'm envious of the French," he said, "because they have taken scientists and artists and given them popular status. We don't have that with our kind of popular culture where rock stars and athletes get all the attention."

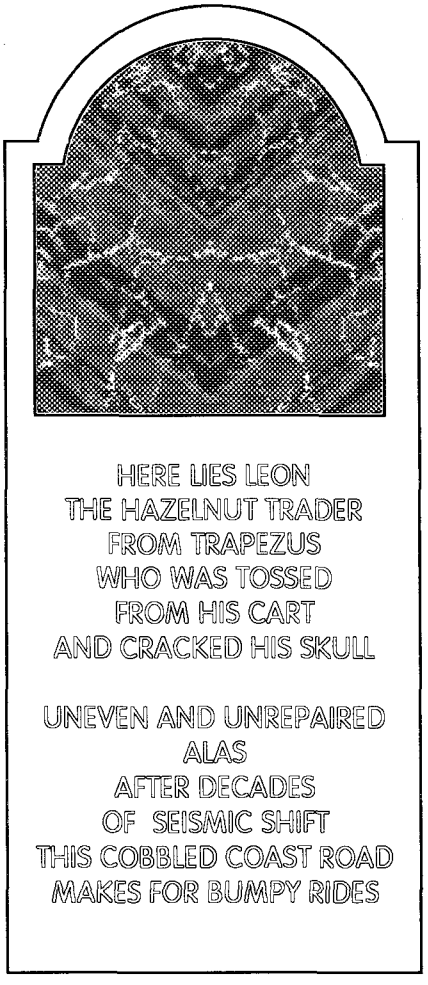
"One Trip Abroad" didn't get enough attention that night to threaten attendance at a Timberwolves game, but it could become competitive.

At the same hour the team was reading "One Trip Abroad" on the third floor, downstairs in the great hall, a tinny version of "Side by Side" was scratching through the p.a. system. On the dance floor under the giant stamp, three young men in tuxedos and three young women in low-waisted dresses were slapping their rumps, waving their hands, kicking out, doing the Black Bottom, then the Charleston, showing a little group of spectators how dancing was done in the 1920s.

The dancers enjoyed the dance. When they'd take a break, they'd go off to the side of the dance floor, stare down at their shoes, slide them back and forth in time with the jazz, laugh. Then back out on the floor and dance again.

The spectators sat around little tables, more waiting than watching. When the dancers finished, there would be lessons.

They finished. Seventeen spectators walked out on the floor. There were more women than men and the instructors had to make adjustments.



M. KASPER

THE NEXT MORNING, I went over to Roy Wilkins Auditorium, a block from Rice Park, for the Fitzgerald events especially arranged for high school kids. "This day is designed especially for the students," said the golden brochure, "to recognize their good work and enthusiasm, and to inspire them to go on to greater things."

For over a year, Kelvin W. Miller's staff had been making arrangements with English teachers, principals, and superintendents of schools from around Minneapolis and Saint Paul to bring nearly 3,000 kids from 70 schools to the celebration.

By 8:45 a.m. with half a dozen uniformed traffic police outside keeping order, yellow school buses were letting off packs of kids in front of the auditorium. They piled slowly up the steps in a holiday stream, about equally male and female, but only an occasional kid of color.

Each picked up a golden Fitzgerald celebration brochure especially bound with blank pages inside for taking notes. Each received a commemorative postcard carrying an official can-

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celled Fitzgerald stamp. Then they moved into a holding area about the size of two basketball courts, where they could talk with booksellers and publishers who sat behind tables and passed out information: POGOS PRESS * ARTWORLD QUARTERLY * HUNGRY MIND BOOKS. There were apples and bananas in tubs for the taking. Over in a corner under a cluster of gray balloons with Fitzgerald's face stencilled on, the Saint Paul Academy Jazz Ensemble was playing what sounded like a cool version of "Over the Rainbow."

Six girls sat in a circle on the floor by the apple tub. They were 11th and 12th graders. They named a school. They had just finished talking about *The Great Gatsby* "in English." Five of them had finished reading the book, but one of them was still working on it.

"I just hated the ending."

"It was really hard to get into, but after the first two chapters, it was good."

"We looked for symbols. Our teacher said colors are important symbols in that book."

"Yellow."

None of them wanted to be a writer.

By 9:30, most of the thousand chairs on the ground floor in the auditorium were filled with kids. So were most seats in the balcony that curved above. Huge blue signs with lettered quotations from Fitzgerald's works hung from the sides of the balcony—LIFE IS A ROMANTIC MATTER said the sign to my right.

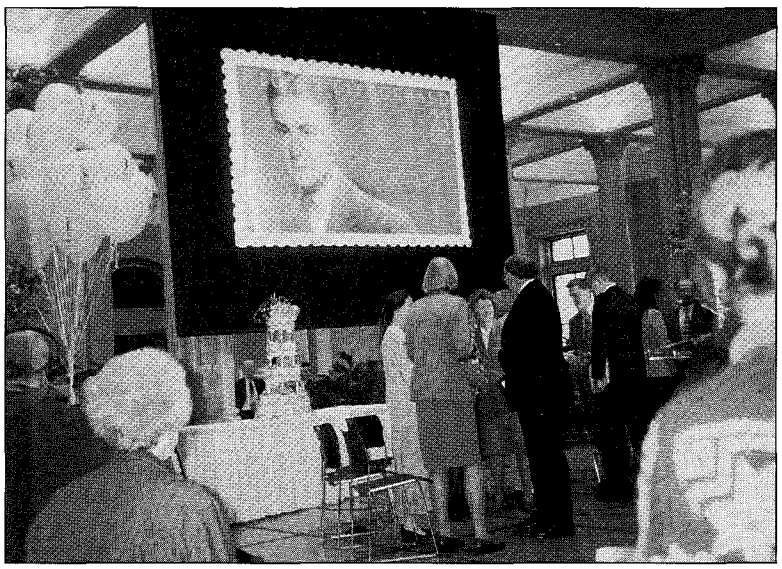
One by one, the well-known visiting writers and special guests who had been invited to Saint Paul especially to attend the Fitzgerald celebration and talk to the kids came up the side stairs onto the stage. They sat behind a row of tables holding name cards and microphones:

MICHAEL DORRIS JANE SMILEY
TOBIAS WOLFF ELEANOR LANAHAN
BOBBIE ANN MASON DONALD HALL
FRANCES KROLL RING
ROBERT BLY JOSEPH HELLER
PATRICI HAMPL.

Garrison Keillor, very tall over the seated guests, walked leisurely onto the stage and moved to a stool beside the writers' table. Keillor invited everyone to sing "America the Beautiful." He began singing in that soft, commanding voice familiar to *Prairie Home Companion* listeners. Very softly, the words came from this large audience.

Keillor, half sitting on the stool like an old-time schoolmaster though he had no pointer, began reading an account of Fitzgerald's life, beginning with his early Saint Paul years. Photographs of Summit Avenue buildings from Fitzgerald's youth flashed on screens set up on either side of the stage.

It seemed Keillor read for a long time. Except for once when a few in the audience hooted at a photograph of young Fitzgerald in drag, the nearly 3,000 kids remained silent. Perhaps Keillor's low, rhythmic voice communicated warnings of a kind of dangerous authority.



Whatever the reason, he read to a very quiet group, his soft monotone continuing with occasional pauses at unexpected places, telling about Scott and Zelda and the "intensity of their frivolity."

The well-known writers and guests sitting in a line on stage remained as silent as the kids in the audience. Jane Smiley, Donald Hall, and Michael Dorris smiled from time to time in the direction of the audience, though it is doubtful they could see faces in the dim expanse beyond the edge of the stage.

When Keillor finished reading, he turned to the line of visitors and, still the schoolmaster, began to question them individually. Why did you become a writer? was the question, but the words changed from one person to another.

Now, Jane Smiley, what made you decide to be a writer?

Jane Smiley laughed and said she became a writer because she was tall.

My true beginning as a writer came when I realized I couldn't do anything else, Tobias Wolff answered.

Bobbie Ann Mason said she had originally wanted to be a singer.

Donald Hall said he wanted to be a baseball player.

How many kids in the audience know who these people are? Hall, for instance, do they know him? Should he read his poem about having flowers in his belly? Or Heller? Do they know how long ago *Catch 22* was published?

There followed a confused and awkward discussion about writers and writing. Sometimes the discussion was directed by Keillor's questions. Sometimes Keillor seemed to want the group to take off in its own direction, but the group appeared not to be comfortable with itself. Everyone was modest. No one wanted control ... Heller, who became the sage of the group, observed that Fitzgerald had everything he wanted at the age of 23 and his success ruined him. Hall said Fitzgerald's first two novels were "lousy," but Fitzgerald continued writing and didn't give up. Smiley said writing is the most interesting thing a person can do. There was advice for young writers: it helps to be unhap-

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py; it helps to have a bad middle school experience. The writers agreed that any kind of life can be material for a writer who truly wants to write.

Everyone in the group was trying to say something helpful to a kid out there in the auditorium who might want to be a writer, maybe a new Fitzgerald.

From time to time during the week, I had heard from someone in a crowd or in a line, "If Fitzgerald were alive today, I wonder what he'd think of ..." and then the person would wait for a moment and add "this party" or "Saint Paul" or once I heard "Garrison Keillor." I can't remember anyone ever *answering* the question, though. It was always left hanging, as if its suggestiveness were sufficient to justify utterance.

Sitting there, looking up at the well-known writers straining to say something helpful to an imaginary kid who might want to write, I kept thinking about that question, wondering about a new Fitzgerald who might be here this morning. Could anything these successful writers say make a difference to him or her? To put the question another way, could other writers have said anything helpful to young Scott Fitzgerald had they had the opportunity 80 years ago? Could Hamlin Garland have helped him with advice? Frank Norris? Would Fitzgerald listen? Or, as Vance Bourjaily asked in his wonderfully sympathetic "Fitzgerald Attends My Fitzgerald Seminar," would a live Fitzgerald be sitting anxious, ready to leave with the good-looking girl across the aisle, just waiting to head up to Rice Park with her for a cookie and a glass of milk.

It's not that I was impatient with the well-known writers on the stage. They were trying very hard. They did what they could. They had a difficult assignment.

Maybe the problem was that there was no dialogue between the writers and the kids. Not a kid asked a question.

BY 10:30, WE WERE ALL moving up the street toward Rice Park and the breakout session of our choice. I walked with a group of male kids who talked about where they would meet for lunch.

We had these breakout options:

How Do You Write a Novel? Scott Donaldson (moderator) with Faith Sullivan and Michael Dorris.

The Fitzgeralds of Today Don't Write Books, They Make Movies, a debate with Jane Smiley, Bill Holm, and Garrison Keillor.

Beginnings of a Writer, Tobias Wolff.

Mr. Fitzgerald, As I Knew Him, Frances Kroll Ring.

My Grandfather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eleanor Lanahan.

Fitzgerald in Minnesota: How He Turned His Life into Fiction (slide lecture), David Page and John Koblas.

Growing Up Reading Fitzgerald, Bobbie Ann Mason and Patricia Hampl.

The Literature of Despair, Joseph Heller.

Robert Bly, author of *Iron John* and *The Sibling Society*, discussing the danger to storytelling culture posed by the Internet ('the neocortex eating itself') and television ('the thalidomide of the 90s'), introduced by Bill Holm.

A year ago, I asked some students to read *Spillville* and then "Shiloh." They admired the skill that made *Spillville* and they cared a lot about the characters in "Shiloh." Those students were themselves teachers from small towns in the region and some of them said they were certain they knew Norma Jean who works at the Rexall Drug Store. So I chose Hampl and Mason.

They talked in a bright upper room of the library overlooking Rice Park. Thirty people came to listen, maybe twenty of them were high school kids.

Hampl talked about how she, like Fitzgerald, grew up thinking Saint Paul was Nowheresville. "You'd have to go to Paris to fall in love," she said. She didn't blame Fitzgerald for leaving Saint Paul. "If he'd been a civic booster, he wouldn't be my kind of guy." She talked about Nick Carraway coming back home to the midwest after his time in the east.

Mason told a long story about when she first went to work in New

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York for a movie magazine. She said the editor told her a story about interviewing Fitzgerald in his New York hotel room and that Fitzgerald propositioned her there. Mason said there is evidence that the last part of the story is inaccurate.

Hampl, who had attended Saint Paul Academy, remembered the nuns at that school remembering dancing the cotillon with Scott Fitzgerald.

Toward the end of the hour, three people stood and asked short questions.

I left in the elevator with three male students.

"Where you guys from?"

They named a school.

"Did you read Fitzgerald in English?" I asked as we were going down.

"We read *Gatsby*," one answered, using the familiar title easily.

"Were you in there just now?" I pointed up toward the room.

They had been.

"What'd you think?"

"They analzyed the stuff to death," one answered.

The other two said, "Yeah."

"Gatsby was O.K., but they analyzed too much for me," the first one said again.

They didn't want to stand around in the elevator and talk. The door opened and they ran toward the food tent in Rice Park.

The committee had arranged for a large rectangular lunch tent in the park—food for the kids. The kids made lines that snaked all the way back around the still-shrouded Fitzgerald statue. I pushed inside the tent and asked if I could help.

"Watch the candy!" yelled a woman who had been calling out, "Only one bar! Take one bar!" Kids were filing past silently, carrying a sandwich in a sack, a can of pop, a sack of potato chips, taking a candy bar. I stood in front of a stack of Snickers, Kit Kats, M&Ms, Reese's Peanut Clusters. "One to a customer," I yelled.

No one taking candy said anything to me about Fitzgerald.

Later, I walked over to the Casino Ballroom in the Saint Paul Hotel. I opened a side door. Soft light fell from four huge chandeliers. Fifteen lines of folding chairs were set in rows of 40, a kid in every chair. Along the back of the room, kids sat on the floor, leaned up against the wall, maybe 600 kids in the room, all silently listening to Garrison Keillor and Bobbie Ann Mason reading "The Ice Palace."

Mason's soft Kentucky vowels made Sally Carrol's words as sweet as a handful of M&Ms. "Oh, Harry, there was something, there was something! I couldn't ever make you understand but it was there."

THAT EVENING, A PARADE circled Rice Park. Phantom flappers waved from the backs of old black touring cars and marching bands played jazz, welcoming the new statue to the park. Then, 400 of us gathered in the hall of the Landmark Center once again, where drums and bugles in the balcony abandoned all restraint and made a mass of sound that shook our ears, crashing back and forth inside the hall and out the doors, at least as far as the park.

Garrison Keillor was there on the stage at the front of the hall, this time wearing a tuxedo that gleamed in the spotlight. He introduced the director of the Children's Theatre Company. We watched a variety show with singers, dancers, clowns. We watched a flapper vamping on stage doing the Charleston. She invited all of us to do it, too. There was jazz in the air. We pushed aside the chairs and danced, some of us better than others.

No matter how you look at it, the celebration was a good time. There were unexpected consequences, of course. There always are. After the final day, one of the readers made it known that his script for "The Ice Palace" had been censored by someone on the celebration committee: where Fitzgerald wrote "pickaninnies," the reader's script read "children;" the word "darkies" had been removed. Now a spirited debate proceeds in the press, in faculty lounges, in seminar rooms, on talk shows around the city, about the wisdom of altering Fitzgerald's words in order to avoid offending sensitive contemporary listeners. The debate is forcing some of his admirers to acknowledge that Fitzgerald shared the prejudices of the elitists of his time. He disliked the smell of immigrants. He was indifferent to the dignity of races other than his own. Surely, though, we can tolerate his limitations while we enjoy the beauty of his words.

Meanwhile, the party's over and, except for the censorship debate, about all that remains is the statue in Rice Park, Fitzgerald holding his hat and overcoat, ready to go. Squirrels play near where he stands. They may be descendents of a pair given to the park as a peace offering by the chief of police of Memphis, Tennessee, twenty years before Fitzgerald was born. Fitzgerald will have to get used to them. And to the cold. And to the people who walk by, stop, and rub his head. I talked with a woman last week who told me that's what people in Saint Paul are doing now: rubbing his head for luck when they walk by. I think I know what Fitzgerald would have thought of that □

Coming in the NAR:

Fiction by Kevin Casey, Kyle Jarrard, Dan Coffey, Mark Halliday

A "Pictonovel" by Judith Palmer & Ben Stoltzfus

Non-fiction by John R. Campbell, Steven Vincent, Robert Newton, Perry Glasser

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Annual Index

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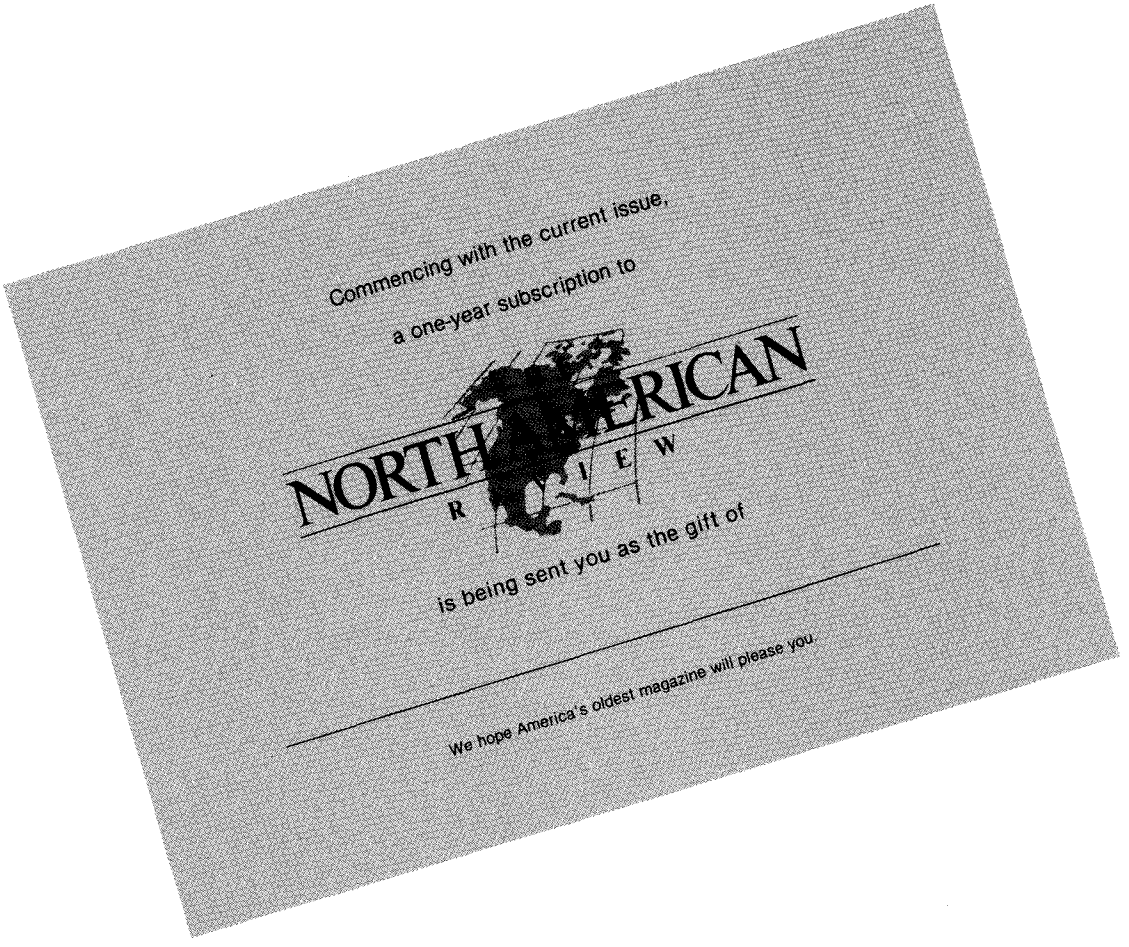
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"The love of wilderness is more than a hunger for what is always beyond reach. It is also an expression of loyalty to the earth, (the earth which bore us and sustains us), the only home we shall ever know, the only paradise we ever need—if we had the eyes to see."

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